TIRUKKOVAIYAR

TAMIL UNIVERSITY

THANJAVUR

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Translated by

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD

The *Tirukkovaiyar* is one of the two works of Manickavachakar the other being the great *Tiruvachakam* which is well known for its passionate and penetrating outpourings of this great saint-poet of Saiva religion. His poetic excellence and ecstacy is so brilliant and powerful that he is rightly called Manickavachakar: "He whose utterances are rubies." If Appar is known for his service to the Almighty and Sambandar is known for his melodious songs and hymns, Manickavachakar is known for his splendid and spontaneous outflow of his personal experience and feelings of the godhead and spiritual ecstacy.

These two great works form the eighth *Tirumurai* of the Tamil saivite canon and they are well known among Saivites and in the Tamil literary world. The *Tirukkovaiyar* which is also known *Tirucchitrampalakkovaiyar* is exclusively a poem on *akam* and it contains 400 stanzas beautifully sung by this brilliant saint-poet. It is true that while the *Tiruvachakam* is well known both in the west and the east, the *Tirukkovaiyar* is yet to make its impact.

In his encyclopaedic survey of Hinduism *(Hindu World* - 1968), Benjamin Walker refers to the *Tiruvachakam*, but not to the *Tirukkovaiyar*. Even the famous work of A.L.Basham *(The Wonder That Was*

India - 1954) makes no reference to the *Tirukkovaiyar*. However Basham has repaired this omission when he edited *"A Cultural History of India"* O.U.P., 1975).

It was therefore felt by litterateurs that an English version of the *Tirukkovaiyar* was a desideratum. It was in the fitness of things that Sekkizhar Adi-p-Podi Siva Sri T.N.Ramachandran came forward to flex his transcreative muscle with a rendering in English of the *Tirukkovaiyar*.

Kovai -- a singular genre, though sui generis --, appears to be a peculiar product of the tamil genius. A layer of eroticism covers its esoteric content. In the spiritual context, it helps one "to grow into God." *Kovai* literature in general, and the *Tirukkovaiyar* in particular, is animated by tenderness and intimacy. Its unique feature is anonymity. The participants for ever remain nameless. The intense anonymity that informs the dramatis personae of a *Kovai*, is a sure indicant of its universality of appeal. It is said: "In the inner world there are no names, no individuals. Indeed the prayer of St.Manickavachakar is : *"Per Venden Oor Venden"* (Neither name nor place do I seek). The Lord too is nameless; truly speaking He is unnameable.

Kovai belongs to the *Akam* species, and *Akam* which is *Veedu* is the ultima Thule which marks the end of life's odyssey. The theme of *Kovai* is love. The episodes of love range from pre-marital 'clandestine' love at first sight at one end, to marital and post-nuptial life of love at the other, where love 'ages' without losing its freshness and variegated charm. Eventually the life of love gains that syblimation which is the consummation devoutly to be wished.

The Tamil University has recently launched an ambitious project, **Translation Of Tamil Classics Into English** and I am very happy to say that within a short

span of time several works have been taken up.

Classics like,

1. Cilappatikaram

2. Manimekalai

3. Bharatiyar Songs

4. Tirukkovaiyar

have been completed and the following are in progress:

5. Akananuru

6. Purananuru

7. Periyapuranam and

8. Kalittokai

I am sure that these translations will be of great use to understand the poetic tradition of Indian Literature in general and Tamil Literature in particular.

4-11-'89,
Thanjavur.

- **Dr. S. Agesthialingom,**
Vice-Chancellor.

PREFACE

It is good that there are still those in this world who believe in a life based on ideals and in the merits of service. Such a one is that gentle and cultured man, Thiru T.N.Ramachandran.

One of the ideals through which he has done service to others is that of the dissemination of Tamil culture through translation. His abundant talents in this field have already become apparent through his published works. Pride of place so far may be seen to belong to his translations from Bharatiyar, for the poetry of whom he has a deep love and admiration which rest on a solid foundation of knowledge and understanding.

In selecting poems by Bharatiyar for translation, Thiru Ramachandran has not been afraid to tackle those that have hitherto seemed too difficult. As a result, it will be possible for those who know no Tamil to gain an appreciation of the whole Bharati.

Now he has again ventured on to new ground with the first translation into English of the *Tirukkovaiyar* in which is interwoven in such an extraordinary manner the depiction of the enduring love of man and woman and that of the bonds that link the devout soul to God.

With his amazing command of both Tamil and English, Thiru Ramachandran has gone about his work with ease and precision. The 'Introduction' furnished by him takes the reader unseathed through the intricate maze of the rules of Tamil Grammar as delineated by the great Tolkappiyar. It equips him with a knowledge, very essential for a correct comprehension of the work. The 'Synopsis' provided by the translator, again, familiarises the reader with the episodic modality of the Tamil *Kovai*. The 'Notes' appended to the translation serve as a commentary, a study in comparative literature and a guide to the spiritual content of the *Tirumurai*.

This translation is much to be welcomed both for making it possible for non-Tamilians at least to read the complete works of St.Manikkavacakar and for the virtuosity evident in this English version, which gets very close to the essence of this profound and difficult work.

- **R.E. Asher,**
Professor of Linguistics,
University of Edinburgh.

INTRODUCTION

The ineluctable nexus betwixt Nature and Man, marked the life and literature of the ancient Tamils. In other words the Geography of the hoary Tamil Nadu determined its History. Anthropo-geography (Human Geography) has been making stupendous strides in the recent past. How geographical factors condition a people's *kultur*, is now being studied with more and more ardour. Scholars are coming out with plentiful information pertaining to the kinship between culture and environment. It is heartening to realise that to the ancient Tamils, their landscape was their soulscape. Their sense of geography and the importance they attached to the soil and the season are today the wonder of the modern world. The Wordsworthian outburst,

"Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon"

could never have been raised against the ancient Tamils. With them, Nature was their all. The poet who sang:

"To me the meanest flower that blows, can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears"

is truly descended of the Sankam poets. Wouldn't Words-worth have felt thrilled to the very cockles of his

heart, had he but read albeit in translation, Kapilar's *Kurinji-p-pattu*, where as many as ninety-nine flowers breathe out a rich variety of fragrance? Such is the glory of the hoary Tamil bards who lived with Nature and whose nature was poetry. We are however centuries away from these wondrous sons of the soil. Today the modern Tamils are blind to the grandeur of nature and most of our bards have no eyes to see what Nature is. Not without cause did Mahakavi Bharati lament thus: "Only in the present unfortunate times, and in this country, men that are blind to the existence of the sky (Nature), lay claim to poetry and fare forth as poets."[1]

"It is a pity that "modern poets" should tend more and more to express tendencies, problems, realisms, romanticisms, mysticisms and all the other local and ephemeral aberrations with which poetry has no business whatever. It is a sign of a decadent and morbid age which is pushing itself by the mass of its own undigested learning into Alexandrianism and scholasticism, cutting itself from the fountainheads of creation and wilfully preparing its own decline and sterility."[2] We shudder to think of Arthur Koestler's dictum which says: "A moribund civilization creates its own morbid grave-diggers."

Present-day poetasters are mindless manufacturers of doggerel and they take pride in condemning Sankam literature. They have the audacity to call it "a stuffed lion," forgetting the fact that their own creation is not even a tulchan but only a stuffed skunk. We are happy to ignore these chronic patients of logorrhoea and heartily hail the Author of *Niti-Venpa* who said: "From them that are wily and cruel at once, it is better to be out of sight altogether."

Even after the advent of Independence, not much has been done in the field of education to kindle an awareness of the glories of India in general and

Tamizhakam in particular. We are sad to relate that the alumnus of Tamil has no idea whatever of his ancient tradition and culture. The present linguistic Tamil zone is a poor shrunken, juiceless representative of the grand old Tamizhakam of Sankam and pre-Sankam Age. The whole of modern Kerala was once a part of Tamil Nadu. The outer fringes of modern Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh were within the Tamil territory. The Tamil country comprised all the land between the hill ranges of sacred Tirupati and Kanyakumari and was flanked on its east and west by the sea.

"There was abundant variety in the landscape offered to the Tamil poet for study and contemplation. From the sandy beaches of the Coromandel to the plains of *Chola* and *Pandya* regions gradually changing into woodland, or progressively ascending to meet the ranges of the Western Ghats which shoot out the Nilgiris, the Palani and Anamalai hills, there is diversity which gave rise to the five-fold regional division fundamental to Tamil poetry. It is possible that the traveller today who uses the main trunk road or the railway from Madras to Tuticorin will probably have impressions of a general aridity and barrenness, especially if he has covered the Madras-Madurai section by night, but no impression of Nature in South India may be said to be accurate or complete without a visit to the Western Ghats, the Nilgiris, or Kodaikkanal, and to the long strip of luscious greenery and backwater between the frontier mountains of Travancore-Cochin and Arabian Sea. Except for the absence of snow, South India is representative of a great range of climate and terrain."[3]

Such was indeed the hoary Tamizhakam dear to gods themselves. It was the House of Poetry where throve bards of great eminence. Great classics of literature here took their birth. They have come to us that live centuries later, in fairly altered conditions, as the voice of our own experience. They are unique;

they are universal. With their ballads and songs, the ancient Tamil poets were able to make as well as record the history of Tamizhakam.

When we speak of Sankam Literature we refer to the third Sankam which flourished about two thousand years ago at Madurai. Sankam was an Academy where the threefold Tamil relating to Prose, Verse and Drama, was cultivated by scholars of great eminence, under royal patronage. The great opus on Grammar known the world over as the *Tolkappiyam*, belonged to the second Sankam. Except in commentaries, we do not now meet with ancient Tamil Prose. It is a misfortune that not even one drama of the ancient times is today extant. Thus Sankam Literature in its present form is only Sankam Poetry. If we place the *Tolkappiyam* beyond the pale of Sankam Poetry, Sankam Poetry as we have today comprises only 2,381 poems composed by 473 poets.[4]

The twofold division of Sankam Literature into *Akam* (pronounced *'Aham')* and *Puram* is characteristic of the genius of Tamil language. *Akam* deals with Love; *Puram* with all other things. In fact *Puram* is referred to as that which is not *Akam*. It is difficult for anyone who has not received the necessary drilling in Tamil language, to comprehend the wisdom behind this categorization. *Akam* means that which is ab infra, interior, internal, subjective. The word includes 'home' and 'heart'. Interior love-life constitutes *Akam*. External activity marks *Puram*. The moods of love, its organised vagaries, detailed complexities, images, patterns and symbols constitute *Akam*. Invisible feelings and emotions are the subject of *Akam*. Though these may, to an extent, find expression in *Puram*, these aren't the stuff of *Puram*. *Puram* deals with affairs of state and society, war, politics, government etc. Indigence, grace, magnanimous patronage and the like are also topics covered by *Puram*.

It will be appropriate to recall here that whereas external activity is capable of ocular apprehension, internal activity remains invisible. Even here we cannot lose sight of the saw that says: "Face is the index of mind." The human body does not act or react by itself. It is linked with what may be described as the 'inner sensorium' which has a mighty role to play in one's life. *Akam* and *Puram* are therefore interdependent, though each can stand an independent treatment. This then is the *raison d' etre* for the establishment of the traditional dichotomy of the subjective and the objective in Tamil literature. The later categorization of *Akap-puram* acts as a buffer between the main divisions.

The importance of an approach based on this type of categorization has come to be felt in the recent past. "After all, it must be remembered that the aim of a lyrical poem, especially when it deals with landscape, and when it uses words like sun-shine, twilight, clouds, mountains or the seas, is not to inform us of specific, physical or meteorological facts but to express certain feelings in us. What has often been called the Wordsworthian attitude to Nature and what has been reiterated with reference to the admitted English taste for landscape painting, keep in view this particular aspect. Bergson postulates in his concept of the objective as well as of the subjective world an energising principle which he names the *Elan Vital* and which, in his view, makes more intelligible the Creative Evolution regarded by him as the ground or substratum of existence. The landscape painter and the landscape poet are likewise the exponents of the *Elan Vital* which is perceived by them in the phenomena of the Universe and which brings them into close relation with the human mind and the emotion."[5] Let us also carefully weigh the words of Stopford Brooke who in his "Nationalism in English Poetry" observes thus: "There are two great subjects of poetry; the natural world and human nature. When Poetry is best, most healthy,

most herself, she mingles together human nature and Nature, and the love of each. Human nature is first in poetry and Nature second but they must be together, if the poetry is to be great and passionate, simple and perceptive, imaginative and tender. It is a terrible business for poetry when it is wholly employed on man, or wholly employed on Nature. In either case the poetry becomes thin, feeble, unimaginative, incapable of giving impulse or bringing comfort." Quoting the above passage in his wondrous work "Landscape and Poetry" Thani Nayagam Adikal proceeds to say: "Stopford Brooke might have spoken of ancient Tamil poetry in these words, for the happy combination runs through all Sankam literature. The Tamil poets made man their greatest study, not man of one class or society but ideal man and universal man. They were expected to be both psychologists and naturalists, and Nature was important to them only in relation to man."

One of the Tamil words used to denote the earth is *"Nanilam"* which literally means, land which is fourfold. This word *'nanilam'* is a significant word. It bears abundant testimony to the geographical knowledge of the ancient Tamils. The four types of land referred to as *'Nanilam'* are: *Kurinji* (the hills), *Mullai* (the wooded forest), *Marutam* (the lowland or the arable region) and *Neytal* (the littoral tract). Each of these is described as a world by itself. Each by itself is self-sufficient, though contact with the other regions will be enriching and rewarding.

Tolkappiyar says:

"The world of forest is presided over by *Mayon (Vishnu);* The world of lofty hills is presided over by *Seyon (Murukan);* The world well-watered is presided over by *Ventan (Indra);* The world of immense beach is presided over by *Varunan* (the god of rains)." These are traditionally designed as *Mullai, Kurinji, Marutam* and *Neytal.* To

these four is added the fifth known as *Palai*, the arid wasteland. This indeed is not an addition; it is a case of goodly wine turning into vinegar.

Nanilam

This regional classification is at once aesthetic and cultural. The naming of the regions is full of significance. The hill-region is named after *Kurinji*, a flower (Strobilanthus) that blooms but once in twelve years in the hills; the region of the wooded forest is named after *Mullai*, the white-jasmine (Jasminum Tricotomum) the sweetest flower that blows in that region; the arable lowland is named after *Marutam*, the myrtle (Terminalia Eomentosa), the 'flowermark' of the fields; the littoral tract is named after *Neytal*, the water-lily that beautifies the pools and the tanks in the maritime belt; the wasteland is named after Palai (Mimusops Hexandra) the flower of *Palai-tree* that can survive the cruellest summer. These flowers also symbolise the patterns of behaviour ascribed to the regions.

Tinai

Tinai is a word used by the Tamils to refer to earth or land. The five types of land therefore came to be known as *Kurinji-tinai*, *Mullai-tinai* etc. The word *'tinai'* also denotes conduct or custom. It has reference to behaviour (ஒழுக்கம்). *Akam* and *Puram* in practical application came to be known as *Aka-t-tinai* and *Pura-t-tinai*. So, *tinai* came to mean conventional rules of conduct as laid down in the Tamil works of *Akam* and *Puram*. Thus *Aintinai* which means a pentad of *tinais* coming under the category of *Aka-t-tinai* has reference to Kurinji, *Mullai*, *Marutam*, *Neytal* and *Palai*. The word *'tinai'* again stands for a sub-class of poetry too.

The *Tolkappiyam*, the most ancient of works now extant in Tamil, is a work on grammar. It contains

a chapter on Poetics. The third division of this work is called *Porulatikaram* and this provides the living source for the study of Love as treated by the Tamils. Conventions regulating *Akam* and *Puram* are enunciated here in great detail. For the ensuing explication of *Aka-t-tinai* we lean heavily on this section of the great work.

Seven are the *tinais* commencing from *Kaikkilai* and ending with *Peruntinai.*

கைக்கிளை முதலாப் பெருந்திணை யிறுவாய்
முற்படக் கிளந்த வெழுதிணை யென்ப.

These are *Kaikkilai, Mullai, Kurinji, Palai, Marutam, Neytal* and *Peruntinai.*

Of these, leaving out the first and the last, is a pentad of *tinais,* and for each in this pentad is an apportioned region in this world which is sea-girt.

அவற்றுள்
நடுவ ணைந்திணை நடுவண தொழியப்
படுதிரை வையம் பாத்திய பண்பே.

What is *Kaikkilai?*

A lad eyes a lass; he is swayed by uncontrollable passion at the sight of her. The girl as yet experiences no such emotion. In Shakespeare's words, she is "unapt to toy" being "frosty in desire." She does not reciprocate even a tithe of his fiery passion. She is cold and taciturn. To his words of praise she is deaf. When he blames himself for his plight, she takes no note of it. His eloquence is repelled by her silence. He feels joyous in a way.

It is for such reasons that *Kaikkilai* is equated with unrequited love. The author of "The Tamil Concept of Love" calls it a comedy of errors.

காமஞ் சாலா விளமை யோள்வயின்
ஏமஞ் சாலா விடும்பை யெய்தி
நன்மையுந் தீமையு மென்றிரு திறத்தான்
தன்னொடு மவளொடும் தருக்கிய புணர்த்துச்
சொல்லெதிர் பெறாஅன் சொல்லி யின்புறல்
புல்லித் தோன்றுங் கைக்கிளைக் குறிப்பே.

Dhanyamalini, in my opinion, expounds *Kaikkilai* to Ravana thus:

"There's nothing but frustration in loving
a woman who will not love."
- (Tr. Dr.K.R.S.)

Again when Virgil talking of Corydon says:

"Young Corydon, the unhappy shepherd swain,
The fair Alex is loved, but loved in vain"

he instances a case of *Kaikkilai.*

Now we will try to undetrstand the import of *Peruntinai.* In this are included·

1. the act of riding the palm-horse,
2. the undesirability of union in view of one being old,
3. a state of exceeding passion which is blind and
4. a union (in heat).

ஏறிய மடற்றிற மிளமை தீர்திறம்
தேறுத லொழிந்த காமத்து மிகுதிறம்
மிக்க காமத்து மிடலொடு தொகைஇ
செப்பிய நான்கும் பெருந்திணைக் குறிப்பே.

We are not here indulging in an elaborate discussion of either *Kaikkilai* or *Peruntinai* as our concern is mainly with *Aintinai.*

Poetry -- its ingredients:

Mutal-porul, Karu-p-porul and *Uri-p-porul* are the stuff of poetry. *Mutal* is more important than *Karu* which is more important than *Uri.*

முதல் கரு வுரிப்பொரு ளென்ற மூன்றே
நுவலுங்காலை முறை சிறந் தனவே
பாடலுட் பயின்றவை நாடுங்காலை

Knowledgeable persons have averred that *Mutal* consists of place and time.

Now a word about the region pertaining to each *tinai.*
The world of sylvan forest is presided over, by *Vishnu;*
The world of hills, by *Muruka;*
The world (of arable tracts) well-watered, by *Indra;*
The world of extensive sandy beach, by *Varuna;*
They are respectively described as *Mullai, Kurinji, Marutam* and *Neytal*.

மாயோன் மேய காடுறை யுலகமும்
சேயோன் மேய மைவரை யுலகமும்
வேந்தன் மேய தீம்புன லுலகமும்
முல்லை குறிஞ்சி மருத நெய்தலெனச்
சொல்லிய முறையாற் சொல்லவும் படுமே.

This sutra, inter alia, points out to the fact that by the time of the *Tolkappiyam* an agreeable blending of the Aryan and the Dravidian civilizations had taken place. The deities spoken of in this sutra are Vedic deities. It is thus clear that from very ancient times harmonious kinship had subsisted between these two great civilizations, and that the resultant benefits had been shared by both. This is further reinforced by the grand and solemn affirmation of Kaniyan Poonkunranar, a bard of the *Purananuru,* who proclaims:

"All towns are ours; all men our kinsmen"
"யாதும் ஊரே, யாவருங் கேளிர்.

Universality appeals to all evolved minds. Shakespeare says: "One touch of Nature makes the world kin."

To take the thread. What is the *Mutal* appropriate to *Mullai?*

Rainy season and eventide are of *Mullai.*

காரு மாலையு முல்லை

The Tamil months of *Avani* and *Purattasi* constitute the rainy season. And eventide is sun-set. Each region has its appropriate season as well as specific part of day or night. The season is called *Perumpozhutu* (major time) and the part of day or night, *Sirupozhutu* (minor time).

Winter and midnight are of *Kurinji*, say the wise.

குறிஞ்சி
கூதிர் யாம மென்மனார் புலவர்

The Tamil months of *Aippasi* and *Kartikai* constitute the winter. It is also said that the early dewy season is of *Kurinji.*

பனியெதிர் பருவமு முரித்தென மொழிப

The first half of the dewy season is covered by the Tamil months *Markazhi* and *Thai.*

Small hours and dawn are of *Marutam.*

வைகறை விடியன் மருதம்

It is to be noted here that as no specific season is assigned to *Marutam*, all seasons may be regarded as appropriate to *Marutam.*

Afternoon is of *Neytal.*

எற்பாடு
நெய்த லாதன் மெய்பெறத் தோன்றும்

Here too as in the case of *Marutam*, as no season is mentioned, all seasons may be regarded as appropriate to *Neytal.*

From sutra 73 of *Porulatikaram*, we infer that *Palai* is the fourth of the sevenfold *Aka-t-tinai*. We therefore take it that the following sutra has reference to *Palai*.

"The middle *tinai* is of mid-day
And is linked with *Venil*."

நடுவு நிலைத்திணையே நண்பகல் வேனிலொடு
முடிவு நிலை மருங்கின் முன்னிய நெறித்தே.

Venil comprises both *Ila Venil* and *Mutu Venil*. Tamil months *Chithirai* and *Vaikasi* constitute the early *Venil* and Tamil months *Ani* and *Ati* constitute late *Venil*.

Again it is said that the later half of dewy season is of *Palai*.

பின்பனி தானு முரித் தென மொழிப

The Tamil months of *Masi* and *Pankuni* constitute the later half of dewy season.

It is to be noted that these sutras speak about conditions which prevailed millennia ago. These cannot therefore apply on all fours to conditions rife at present.

With the knowledge gained about *Mutal Porul* we will proceed to understand what *Uri-p-porul* and *Karu-p-porul* are.

Union, parting, expectant waiting, pining during the absence of husband, and love-quarrel and their causes are *Uri-p-porul* in relation to *tinais*.

புணர்தல் பிரித லிருத்த லிரங்கல்
ஊட லவற்றி னிமித்த மென்றிவை
தேருங் காலைத் திணைக்குரிப் பொருளே.

Union takes place in *Kurinji*, parting in *Palai*; expectant waiting in *Mullai*; pining in *Neytal*; bouderie in *Marutam*.

The order of *Uri-p-porul* as delineated in this sutra is a natural one. Lovers meet and union takes place. The pre-marital union is thought of as something divine and pre-ordained. A wedding of minds has taken place. The ritualistic matrimony will eventually take place though it may appear for a time that marriage can never take place. The lovers have plighted their word. Their relationship is not yet known to the world. Then separation takes place. Following separation, waiting and pining dominate the life of the beloved. The Lady-love manifests her virtue by her patient waiting. She puts up a stiff upper lip and bears her agony in silence. This waiting coupled with a stoic fortitude is characteristic of *Mullai*, and the flower of this region which is also called *Mullai* is a symbol of chastity. Pining takes place in *Neytal*. The silent agony here finds expression in touching words. The grief is irrepressible and eyes rain tears. Re-union as well as marriage then takes place. Their love is heightened by love-quarrel. Bouderie, as observed by Tiruvalluvar, is the salt of love-life.

Separation

Separation is characteristic of pre-marital and post-marital love. The lovers who are yet to wed, have to part, though for the time being. Parting is painful. Yet parting which will end in re-union has its own sweetness. Said Romeo to Juliet:

"Parting is such sweet sorrow
That I shall say good night till it be morrow."

The parting spoken of is twofold. Thus have averred the great ones.

இரு வகைப் பிரிவு நிலை பெறத் தோன்றலும்
உரிய தாகு மென்மனார் புலவர்.

1. The lover may elope with his beloved. This takes place in *Palai*. 2. The lover may part from his

love as a result of which the lady-love may be put to great grief.

Elopement is parting, perhaps in the sense that the lover and the beloved part from their kith and kin. However parting stricto sensu is the parting of the lover from his beloved.

It is but proper that we should now know what *Karu-p-Porul* means. Every region is characterised by its presiding deity, food, flora and fauna, instruments, music, culture, vocation pursued by its people, etc. These constitute *Karu-p-Porul* which is linked to that region and which again has characteristic features relating to its *Mutal Porul*.

முதலெனப் படுவ தாயிரு வகைத்தே
தெய்வ முணாவே மாமரம் புட் பறை
செய்தி யாழின் பகுதியொடு தொகைஇ
அவ்வகை பிறவுங் கருவென மொழிப.

We have already mentioned about the presiding deities of the four regions. *Palai* has no region of its own. Therefore no deity is associated with it. So, Nacchinarkiniyar is of the opinion that a given strip of *Palai* will be taken as presided over by that deity which is the deity of the region before it became *Palai*. Ilamporanar however affirms that Mother Durga presides over *Palai*. His dictum is confirmed by interpretations relating to the following sutra of the *Tolkappiyam*, in later times:

மறம் கடைக் கூட்டிய குடிநிலை, சிறந்த
கொற்றவை நிலையும் அத்திணைப் புறனே.

Yet another factor which should not be lost sight of is this. *Karu-p-Porul* may not only differ from region to region but also differ in one and the same region during different seasons. Again, the omission of food varieties relating to the various regions by Tolkappiyar has been abundantly repaired by his commentators. The following charts are-self-explanatory.

CHART - I

Tinai	Region	Major time	Minor time
Mullai	Forest and sylvan tracts	Rainy season *Avani-Purattasi*	Evening
Kurinji	Hills and mountainous tracts	Winter and Early Dewy seasons *Aippasi-Kartikai* and *Markazhi-Tai*	Midnight
Palai	Arid wilderness	Summer mild and wild, and Late Dewy season -- *Chittirai-Vaikasi*, *Aani-Aadi* and also *Masi-Pankuni*	Mid-day
Marutam	Farms and agricultural tracts	All seasons	Small hours and Dawn
Neytal	Sea and littoral tracts	-do-	Sun-set

CHART - II

Region	Name of People	Name of Chieftains
Mullai	*Edayan, Aayar*	*Annal, Thondral*
Kurinji	*Kuravan, Kuratthi*	*Malai Nadan, Verpan*
Palai	*Eyinar, Eyitthiyar*	*Meeli, Vitalai*
Marutam	*Uzhavar, Uzhatthiyar*	*Ooran, Makhizhnan*
Neytal	*Nulaiyar, Nulaicchiyar*	*Seyrppan, Turaivan, Konkan*

CHART - III

Karu-p-porul	*Mullai*	*Kurinji*	*Palai*	*Marutam*	*Neytal*
1. Deity	*Vishnu*	*Muruka*	*Kali*	*Indra*	*Varuna*
2. Food	Paspulam frumentaceum and 'mutirai' a pulse-variety	Millet, wild rice and *'vetir nel'*	Whatever is obtained by loot	Rice	Food obtained by sale of salt
3. Animal	Deer, rabbit	Elephant, tiger, hog, bear	Emaciated elephant, tiger, wild dog *(sennai)*	Buffalo and the water-dog *(Neernai)*	Shark, cod
4. Tree	Indian labur-num, Cinna-monum Cassia, 'Putal'	Indian Kino, Silk-cotton tree	Mimusops Hexandra, South Indian mahua, spurge, *'Soorai'*	*Arjuna*, *Myrobalan*, River Portia	Alexandrian laurel, Fragrant screw pine
5. Bird	Forest hen	Peacock, Parrot	Vulture, Hawk	Swan, *'Anril'*	The sea-crow

Karu-p-porul	*Mullai*	*Kurinji*	*Palai*	*Marutam*	*Neytal*
6. Drum	*'Erukot parai'*	*Veriyattu-p-Parai'* *Thontaka-p-Parai'*	*Vazhi-p-pari Parai* *Soorai Konda Parai*	*Nellari Parai*	*Navai-p-parai*
7. Vocation	Grazzing cattle	Honey-gathering	Dacoity	Agriculture	Fishing and salt manufacture
8. Tune *(Raga)*	*Satari (Kamavardhini)*	*Kurinji*	*Palai*	*Marutam*	*Sevvazhi*
9. Flower	Jasmine, The Wild shrub bearing white fragrant flower, Jasminum sambac	Gloriosa superba, strobilanthus	Wild cinchona (Maram flower)	Lotus, lily	Lotus alba
10. Source of Water	Jungle-river	Springs, water-falls	Disused wells, springs	Rivers, Tanks	Wells, Sea-water

Our charts have omitted two divisions of *Akam* poetry (viz) *Kaikkilai* and *Peruntinai* as these two are not endowed with any landscape of their own. They are regarded as two phases of erotomania, outside the pale of *Aintinai* which rests on the bedrock of mutual love.

Though *Palai* has no region of its own, yet it plays an important role in *Aintinai*. *Palai* is not at all desert, in the sense that the Sahara is a desert. No desert exists in the whole of South India. "What the ancient Tamils" says Thani Nayagam Adikal, "meant by the term *Palai* is forest and jungle and land belonging to any of the other regions, especially montane and pasture-land, which because of the want of seasonal rains, or because of natural aridity, has become temporarily desert-like in the summer season. This temporary desert may occur in tropical climates even in the mountains, for when the mountains become subject to aridity, the heat and the general aspect of parched and desolate Nature is even more evident on the mountains than in the plains."

The hero may cross *Palai* and even seas, to come by wealth. The heroine is forbidden from going with the hero on sea.

முந்நீர் வழக்க மகடூஉவோ டில்லை

Again the riding of palm-horse is a taboo for the woman. Woman shall never proclaim her love publicly. It is indecent.

எத்திணை மருங்கினு மகடூஉ மடன்மேல்
பொற்புடை நெறிமை யின்மை யான.

It is good to remember the words of the love-mad *Kuyil* to her lover, in this context. The *Kuyil* says:

"I do know that custom forbids women
From giving vent to their passionate love.'

Two instances of departure from this settled rule could be cited; but they relate to *Asura* women, viz., Soorpanaka and Hidumpi.

Tiruvalluvar says that a woman should never ride the palm-horse. *Kural* 1137 says:

'Nothing is grander than the woman
  who refuses to ride
the palm-horse even when the passion
  of her
neart is deep as the ocean.'

On Madal we will indite a word or two in our notes to stanza 73 of the *Tirukkovaiyar.*

In love-poetry, the unbreakable convention established by Tolkappiyar is that the characters shall never be named.

மக்க ளுதலிய வகனைந் திணையும்
சுட்டி யொருவர்ப் பெயர்க்கொளப் பெறாஅர்

N.Raghunathan clothes this idea in Shakespearian phraseology thus: "The *'akam'* poet, in describing his lovers in these various emotional states, should be careful not to give him or her a local habitation and a name, since that would mar the idealized portrait of a passion, which is in truth, the poet's objective."

These are some of the rules enunciated by the *Tolkappiyam*, a work on Grammar which contains within itself, if we may so say, The Grammar of Love. Tolkappiyar is indeed the acknowledged legislator of Tamil literature.

The *Tirukkovaiyar*

The four premier saint-singers of Tamil Saivism, viz., Tirugnanasambandhar, Tirunavukkarasar, Sundarar and Manickavachakar, it is well known, hymned Budd-

hism and Jainism away from South India. To-day the living religion of Saivism derives sustenance mainly from the hymns of these saints who are revered as "The Four."

The last of The Four is our saint-singer Manickavachakar. The eldest of them all is Tirunavukkarasar. He is popularly known as Appar (Father) and it was with this endearing word, he was greeted by the child-saint Tirugnanasambandhar, his junior contemporary who flourished in the middle of the 7th century A.D. Sundarar flourished either at the end of the 7th century or at the beginning of the 8th century A.D. Manickavachakar flourished during the 9th century A.D. The reference to *Varaguna Pandyan* in stanzas 306 and 327 of the *Tirukkovaiyar* is helpful in fixing the Age of Manickavachakar. This king, it is said, reigned in Madurai during the 9th century A.D.

Manickavachakar was born in a town called Vadhavoor near Madurai. He is generally referred to as Vadhavoorar (he of Vadhavoor). His parents perhaps named him Siva Bhathyan as can be inferred from the following hymn of Nampi Andar Nampi:

வருவா சகத்தினின் முற்றுமுணர்ந் தோனைவண் தில்லை மன்னைத்

திருவாத வூர்ச்சிவ பாத்தியன் செய்திருச் சிற்றம்பல

பொருளார் தரு திருக்கோவை . . .

Tradition has it that even as Marulnekkiyar (St. Appar) was greeted with the title "Tiru Navukkarasu" by Lord *Siva*, our saint-poet was also greeted with the title 'Manickavachaka' which means 'he whose utterances are rubies.'

Manickavachakar is the author of the *Tiruvachakam* and the *Tirukkovaiyar* (also known as the *Tiruchitrambalakkovaiyar*), and these two works constitute the corpus of the 8th of the twelve *Tirumarais*. While the *Tiruvachakam* either in entirely or in part, had

been translated into English, French and German, the *Tirukkovaiyar* had not been so far translated into even English. What is more, it is not even properly cultivated by the Tamils who are fairly familiar with the *Tiruvachakam*. The *Tiruvachakam* is increasingly becoming popular in the West. The recent work 'Hymns to the Dancing *Siva*' by our esteemed friend Dr.Glenn E.Yocum is bound to add to the growing popularity of the *Tiruvachakam*.

While the *Tiruvachakam* attracts the attention of scholars on religion all over the world, the *Tirukkovaiyar* which is a direct product of the Sankam tradition lies shrouded in oblivion. This is a difficult work and its cultivation demands tenacious pursuit. In fact it lies neglected. It is said that the understanding of Milton is the reward of consummate scholarship. I think that this dictum applies to the *Tirukkovaiyar*, a fortiori. In fact, the author of *Ilakkana-k-kothu* -- a grammatical opus par excellence --, says: "If still doubts persist notwithstanding your repeated endeavour to resolve them, have recourse to the *Tolkappiyam*, the *Tirukkural* and the *Tirukkovaiyar*." So, the *Tirukkovaiyar* is a book meant for them who have pursued the study of Tamil with diligence for a long time. No wonder Dr.Glenn E.Yocum makes a confession thus: "The *Tirukkovaiyar* is ostensibly an erotic poem, although it has traditionally been interpreted as an allegory of God's love for the soul. The poem is not an easy one and, as can be imagined, is a far less accessible form of religious literature than the clearly devotional hymns of the *Tiruvachakam*."

St.Kumaraguruparar says that the *Tirukkovaiyar* is a work of wisdom surcharged with love, which deals with the pentad of *tinais*.

ஐந்திணை யுறுப்பி னாற் பொருள் பயக்கும்
காமம் சான்ற ஞானப் பனுவல்.

So it is in the earlier part of this introduction we

took pains to explicate a few of the rules of the *Tolkappiyam*. We feel convinced that this explication should continue in this part also to enable the reader to understand the translation better. The explication hereinafter to be met with, will relate to the rules governing the *Kovai* literature.

George L Hart III says that the *tinais* of *Akam* genre "are encoded with a mood and situation." It is thus *Akam* poems came to be endowed with literary conventions. The value of these conventions is elucidated by Sri.A.V.Subramanian, the Savant of Sankam Literature, thus: "It might be argued that the same effect could be secured by a detailed description of the natural surroundings followed by that of the particular stage of love or of the lovers' mood that is intended to be conveyed, without the aid of such elaborate conventions. There are two reasons why that method is less to be preferred. For one thing, detailed descriptions are tiresome and readers of any era are repelled by them. Remember that a detailed description of the wooded mountain slopes and of the secret love between a boy and a girl has to be waded through every time a poem on this theme is taken up to be enjoyed. The point of all poetry is to pass on experience to the reader: a description of nature is desirable only in so far as it helps in evoking the experience in the reader. In reality, as Lascelles Abercrombie phrased it, "We do not want a transcription from nature, since we have the original always before us: we want an imaginative reconstruction of the possibilities of nature." Such tedious transcriptive passages repeated over and over again cannot promote enjoyment; the harvest of literary pleasure will be incommensurate with so much painful labour.

"But the second is the more weighty reason. If, by convention, the reader is provoked to think of premarital love the moment mountain slopes are mentioned, his response is more subtle because it has been evoked

by suggestion. Literary pleasure is of the subtlest variety; in comparison with it, the sensory pleasures are very gross: in comparison, even the pleasure produced by music or painting is less subtle. It is on account of this extreme subtlety of literary pleasure that it is given to very few to seek it and find it. The grosser satisfactions are easier to garner and have innumerable votaries: more people are addicted to the pleasures of the table than to those of poetry. And such a subtle pleasurable response is more deftly evoked by suggestion than by bland assertion: indeed, in some cases, loud assertions fail altogether to call forth the appropriate response in the reader. Literature is for this reason highly dependent on suggestion. Important Sanskrit writers on poetics declare that suggestion is the very soul of poetry. And Abercrombie agrees that "literary art will always be in some degree suggestion: and the height of literary art is to make the power of suggestion in language as commending, as far-reaching, as vivid, as subtle as possible."

Love-theme as handled by Sankam literature marks the *Tirukkovaiyar*, with this difference, viz., that while *Akam* pieces of Sankam are unconnected monologues, the *Tirukkovaiyar* is not so. It weaves the monologues and some times the duologues too, into sequential narrative. *Kovai* means order. Isolated pieces are ordered into an eloquent narrative in a *kovai*-work. In the *Tirukkovaiyar*, *Veda* and *Agama*, Love and Literature, Logic and Grammar are all ordered into a poetical pattern which is sublime. The grammatical value of the *Tirukkovaiyar* can be appreciated to an extent by a careful perusal of the notes appended to almost every stanza, by the great scholar R.Viswanatha Iyer, the Saraswati Mahal Editor of the *Tirukkovaiyar* (1951).

The Tamil genius delights to revel in the subtleties of grammar. Even works on Tamil grammar are poetical works. A *Chitra-Kavi* can compose a poem within a poem, i.e., from within a poem composed by him,

he can cull another poem in a different metre, without in any way disturbing the order of the words in the original. This genre is called 'concealed poem.' Stanza 56 of *Tirukkovaiyar* is as follows:

தாரென்ன வோங்குஞ் சடைமுடி மேற்றனித் திங்கள் வைத்த
காரென்ன ஆருங் கறைமிடற் றம்பல வன்கயிலை
ஊரென்ன என்னவும் வாய்திற வீரொழி வீர்பழி யேல்
பேரென்ன வோவுரை யீர்வரை யீர்ங்குழற் பேதையரே.

Here line 3 and the first half of line 4 contain a distich of the *Kural* type which is as follows:

ஊரென்ன என்னவும் வாய்திற வீர்பழியேல்
பேரென்ன வோவுரை யீர்.

There are 28 stanzas in the *Tirukkovaiyar* which yield 28 couplets. Again from stanzas 82 and 400 can be formed a pair of *Innisai Venpa*. Stanzas 62, 73, 82, 176, 242 and 257 yield poems in the metre of *Kocchaka Kalippa*. Two pieces of *Akaval* can be constructed from stanzas 289 and 400. I am indebted to this information to Dr.V.S.Chenkalvaraya Pillai, the author of *Tirukkovaiyar Oli Neri*.

The Love-Theme of the *Tirukkovaiyar*

Love in *Akam* literature includes pre-marital love (*Kalavu*) as well as marital love (*Karpu*). Tamil tradition has it that pre-marital love is the highway leading to marital love. The word *Kalavu* means thievery; *Karpu* means married chastity. The word *Kalavu* is not at all used in any pejorative or derogatory sense. It is *Kalavu* in the sense that it waylays both the lovers simultaneously and thereafter their goings-on are clandestine and secret. The secrecy is however shared by the confidant of the hero and the confidante of the heroine. The pre-marital relationship was not denounced by the ancient Tamils and this speaks volumes of their way of life which had a right perception of

the lofty and subtle science as well as the art of sex-life. They were liberal, magnanimous, tolerant and at the same time sublimely virtuous. Only such people could hold *Kalavu* to be licit and rise above the squeamishness and the prudery of the lesser mortals. When *Kalavu* is about to be detected by the world at large, it gets equated with *Karpu*.

The various phases of love are treated under twenty-five chapters *(Kilavis)* in the *Tirukkovaiyar*. It contains 380 sub-topics *(Turais)*. In all, there are 400 stanzas.

The number "four hundred" seems to be a favourite with the ancient Tamils. The *Aka-nanoru* comprises 400 verses; the *Pura-nanoru* contains 400 poems; the *Natrinai* comprises 400 stanzas; the *Kuruntokai* contains 400 poems; the *Pazhamozhi-nanoru* is a work of 400 stanzas.

The *Tirukkovaiyar* contains 25 chapters even as the chapters on Love in the *Tirukkural* are twenty-five in number.

A chapter-war synopsis will be given hereunder and this will follow a detailed description of the first meeting of the lovers. The meeting is the subject-matter of the first of the 25 chapters.

1. The Meeting

The meeting of the lovers though accidental, is never taken as such. It is a Vis Major, an act of Providence. Deivam (தெய்வம்) in Tamil also means Fate. Fate as understood in India has nothing to do with the blind chance-concept of the West. It is the outcome of one's own doings in one's past lives. It is fate which brings about the meeting of the lovers. The English adage which says: Matches are made in Heaven" can be better understood and appreciated by Indians. Curi-

ously the dictum of Shakespeare, viz., "Hanging and wiving goes by destiny" sounds very much Siddhantic as well as Vedantic.

This idea is best expressed by Mahakavi Bharati thus:

"The nexus betwixt us is nothing new,
It originates from the ancient past."

நேற்று முன்னாளில் வந்த உறவன்றடீ; – மிக
நெடும் பண்டைக் காலமுதல் நேர்ந்து வந்ததாம்.

The lovers meet each other prompted by Fate. The first meeting is that meeting when love begins to well up in the hearts of the lovers spontaneously. Neither can hide it from the other. The symptomatic reaction is palpable. It is likened to the oozing of a fresh pot filled with water. Again it is compared to the simultaneous sprouting of a pair of horns in a calf. Love is felt by the loving pair, simultaneously and spontaneously. The first meeting inevitably ends up in the first mating. Yet no fleshy feeling mars the union. The union is as spiritual as it is physical. It is felt to be divine and godly. It is called *Iyarkkai-p-punarchi* (Natural Union). Nature, it is to be remembered is God's own Deputy. The first meeting-cum-mating is therefore deemed to be "the spiritual equivalent of marriage" as is described by David Ludden.

A word of explanation is to be offered here to the reader to help him come by a correct perspective. Ancient *Akam* literature was not democratic in its approach. It would sing of the first meeting of only such exemplary lovers who were alive to the providential force behind their meeting. Besides, they must be privileged to love, and this is dependent upon as many as eight conditions which are social, moral and ethical. Nobility of birth, family character, their own strength of character, the genuineness of their love, chastity, grace, understanding and wealth are the eight indispensables which should mark the lovers. As Friedrich Nietz-

sche says: "Great and fine things can never be common property: *pulchrum est paucorum hominem.*" Love is majestic. Only a princely hero and a queenly heroine can be the participants.

Commentaries on the *Tolkappiyam* insist that the lad must be sixteen years old and the girl only twelve. In a tropical country, it should be remembered, a girl becomes nubile when she is twelve years old. Readers may with advantage recall the following passage in *Romeo and Juliet.* Addressing Juliet who is not even fourteen years old, her mother, Lady Capulet says:

"Well, think of marriage now. Younger than you,
Here in Verona, ladies of esteem
Are made already mothers. By my count,
I was your mother much upon these years
That you are now a maid."

Qualifications prescribed for the man as well as the woman are thus described by the *Tolkappiyam.*

பெருமையு முரனு மாடூஉ மேன

Diginity and soulful valour characterise the hero.

அச்சமு நாணு மடனு முந்துறுதல்
நிச்சமு பெண்பாற் குரிய வென்ப.

Fear, sense of shame and steadfast adherence to principles mark the heroine.

Again, *Kalavu* can take place between him and her of equal status only. However the superiority of the man is no bar for *Kalavu*. The lovers may belong to the same region or different regions. It is providence that brings about their meeting. Every time they incarnate, they in due time become lovers. Tolkappiyar says:

ஒன்றே வேறே யென்றிரு பால்வயின்
ஒன்றி யுயர்ந்த பால தாணையின்
ஒத்த கிழவனும் கிழத்தியும் காண்ப
மிக்கோ னாயினும் கடிவரை யின்றே.

2. The lovers after their first meeting must needs separate. They have had union thanks to their providence. Further meeting in the same place may not be possible. Yet without further meeting they cannot hope to survive. The initiative cannot be taken in this connection by the heroine. She cannot impair her modesty. It is the hero who should devise ways and means for meeting. He therefore enlists the help of his confidant and further meetings become possible. This and the allied phases are included in "*Pankar Koottam*"

3. The second phase of lover's meeting now takes place. This is usually in a grove. It is therefore called *Pozhilidaiccheral*. *Idamtalaippadu* also means the same thing.

4. The bulk of *Akam* literature centres round the role of the confidante. She is the alter ego of the heroine and is none but the daughter of the heroine's nurse who in time past was the confidante of the heroine's mother. The hero seeks the help of this confidante for continuing *Kalavu*. This is known as *Matiudampatuthal*.

5. The hero now turns up where the heroine is and makes it appear that his visits are but casual. But the confidante knows. This phase of *Kalavu* is known as "*Iruvarum Ulvazhi Avan Varavu Unarthal.*"

6. The confidante detecting the surging love of the lovers, teases the heroine in fun. This goes by the name *Munnura Unarthal*.

7. The hero, to justify his presence, offers to be of help to the heroine and her friend. The confidante knows the lurking intention of the hero behind his offer. This is styled *Kuri Ura Unarthal.*

8. The confidante sounds the depths of the lovers' hearts by various means. This is called *Nananattam.*

9. To get a full picture of their love, the confidante spins yarns which are prone to strike terror in the heroine. Hearing that the hero is in jeopardy, the heroine is visibly shaken. This is described as *Natunkanattam.*

10. As the lady-love is chary of further indulgence in love and as she is quite adamant in her attitude, the hero threatens to ride the palm-horse and make their love-affair, public. This is called *Madaltiram.*

11. Riding the palm-horse is ever considered to be indecent. The confidante thereupon prevails upon the heroine to fulfil the desire of the hero. This is said to be *Kurinayappitthal.*

12. *Chetpadai* is the next phase which describes the hero coming with green leaves and flowers of gifts to the heroine. These are eventually accepted by the heroine.

13. Trysting by day, then takes place. This is called *Pakal Kuri.*

14. *Iravukkuri* is trysting by night.

15. By now their love-affair is about to become the talk of the town. To give a quietus to the gossipping, the confidante advises the hero to refrain from trysting. The heroine pines lonely. In her distress, she addresses objects, animate as well as inanimate. After sometime the hero turns up. These are treated under *Oruvazhi-thanatthal.*

16. The lovers elope. Elopement is tantamount to a public declaration of the relationship between the lovers. It is for this reason *Akam* literature has included this in *Karpu.* This phase is known as *Utanpokku.*

17. *Varaivu Mudukkam* treats of the confidante's importunities which urge the hero to legalise his love with the ritual of marriage.

18. (The Tamils were a practical people; they were fully alive to the value of money (wealth) which could be put to good many uses). The hero goes away in quest of wealth. The parted beloved is sorrow-stricken. Her ailment is misconstrued by her kith and kin. They think she is possessed. Attempts at exorcism are resorted to. The truth is eventually revealed by the confidante to her mother (nurse) who in turn communicates it to the heroine's mother. This revelation of truth is known as *Aratthodu Nitral* (Poised in Virtue) by *Akam* literature. Meanwhile the hero returns with enormous wealth. The wedding takes place. These are treated under the topic *Varai Porut Pirithal.*

19. The newly-weds set up their family and an ideal home is stablished. The nurse visits them and on her return, gives the heroine's mother a rapturous eye-witness account of their married felicity. This is *Manam Cirappuraitthal.*

20. The hero is but a stripling. He may still have to pursue learning. He may therefore part from his love to prosecute higher studies. (The outer limit of this separation is three years. In other instances of parting, his absence cannot exceed the space of a year). The separation in pursuit of knowledge is called *Odhal Pirivu.*

21. In certain cases, the hero may be a prince. He may be obliged to part from his wife to protect his subjects. This is treated under *Kaval Pirivu*.

22. Again, the services of the hero may be required to bring about a rapprochement between two hostile kings. This may necessitate his absence from home. This is covered by *Pakai-Tani-Vinai-Pirivu*.

23. The King of the realm may commission the services of the hero. To carry out the royal mandate, the hero will have to part from his wife. This is called, *Ventharku-Utruzhi-Pirivu*.

24. The value of wealth can never be ignored. The hero may go in quest of it for a second time. He parts from his wife to come by wealth to lead a happy and virtuous life. This is called *Porul Vayin Pirivu*.

25. The hero of the olden days was privileged to sojourn with courtesans. Though custom and usage permitted this, the heroine, now a wife, could not be happy about it. She will sulk when the hero returns. The confidante plays the role of a pacifier and reunites the couple. This is treated under the topic *Paratthai-yir Pirivu*.

In conclusion we quote hereunder the immortal words of Ammoovanar. with which the husband from the brothel is greeted by his chaste wife. It is such a woman who can symmetricize even the socially accepted asymmetrical love as observed by David Ludden.

"This life of mine may end
And I will take birth anew;
In that life of mine also,
May you be my husband, and I
The sole idol of your heart."

இம்மை மாறி மறுமை யாயினும்
நீயா கியரென் கணவனை
யானா கியர்நின் னெஞ்சுநேர் பவளே.

The Esoteric Content of the *Tirukkovaiyar*

The *Tirukkovaiyar* is one of the two works of the eighth *Tirumurai*. *Tirumurais* are twelve in number and they constitute the Scriptures of Tamil Saivism. That alone which is holy, hallowed, religious and sublime, has found its way into the body of the *Tirumurais*. Ex facie, the *Tirukkovaiyar* is a work that deals with the life and love of a couple. If it had stopped with that, it could not have gained admittance into the sacred corpus of the Saivite gospel. We should know that the compilers of the *Tirumurais* knew what they did, when they compiled the works of the sacred saints and seers of Tamil. That the *Tirukkovaiyar* is brimming with esoteric significance is a fact which cannot be gainsaid. The greatest of its commentators is Perasiriyar. He says: "St.Manickavachakar took upon himself the task of explicating the message of Gnosis as well as knowledge that constitutes the way of the phenomenal world, through this, his work. The import of the subtle yogic wisdom as based on the works of *Agamas* however is well-nigh impossible of instruction by me. Even his message of worldly knowledge is wide as the sea of sweet milk. I dipped into it my petty sense-utensil and have come by a little of that knowledge. Of this I speak here in keeping with the flawless traditions."

திருவாத வூர்மகிழ் செழு மறை முனிவர்
... ...
... ...
அறிவனூற் பொருளு முலகநூல் வழக்குமென
விரு பொருளு னுதவி யெடுத்துக் கொண்டனர்;

ஆங்கவ் விரண்டனுள்
ஆகம நூல் வழியி னுதலிய ஞான
யோகநுண் பொருளினை யுணர்த்து தற்கரி
துலகநூல் வழியி னுதலிய பொருளொனு
மலகி நீம்பாற் பரவைக் கண்ணெம்
புலனெ னுங் கொள்கலன் முகந்த வகைசிறி
துலையா மரபி னுரைக்கற் பாற்று.

Perasiriyar has made it explicit that though he is alive to the metaphysical and the esoterically philosophical content of the *Tirukkovaiyar*, yet he feels he is unable to communicate it to others. However one or two have come forward to explicate the work in a religious cum metaphysical light. Of them mention must be made of the anonymous author of the brief commentary known as the *Tirukkovaiyar Unmai*. This is not actually a commentary in the true sense of the word. The essence of each stanza is here distilled into a line or two. Such capsulization usually goes by the name *"Kolu."* One can therefore understand its laconic nature in the matter of interpretation. Earnest readers are of opinion that the interpretation of this anonymous author is rather forced, in many instances. Again explication of this type is possible for every *Kovai*-work right from *Pandy-k-kovai* to *Karanthai-k-kovai*. Yet, as much wisdom can be garnered from its mystique, Siva Sri Dandappani Desikar was commissioned by the Tiruvavaduturai Mutt to bring out elaborately the significance of this work and the learned author had gone about his work with great seriousness and has produced a well-written work called the *Tirukkovaiyar Unmai Vilakkam*. This is a courageous attempt. However it is to be observed, without meaning any disrespect to the great author, that his work reads like a laboured exercise which is neither

adequate nor satisfactory, for it does not endow the reader with a sense of fulfilment. But it should be said to the credit of this author that it has its virtuous points lighting up many a dark passage.

Some years ago I was delivering weekly lectures on the *Tirukkovaiyar* and my listeners told me that my explicaton in certain instances was lit up by flashes of esoteric brilliance. Let me here now explicate briefly the first stanza of the *Tirukkovaiyar*.

All the five *tinais.* are represented in this poem by their respective flowers. (See notes for Stanza 1). The five *tinais* are symbolic of the five states of the soul, they being (1) wakefulness, (2) dream, (3) dreamless sleep, (4) *turiyam* (temporary oblivion) and (5) *Turiya-titam* (elongated oblivion). The soul undergoes these states at the mere vision of Love. Love is a purifier.

"Love refines
The thoughts, and heart enlarges; hath his
seat
In reason, and is judicious; is the scale
By which to heavenly love thou may'st ascend."

Saktam holds that the husband reaches God through his wife.

The vision of Love vivifies the soul. The love is here described by our saint-poet as the victorious pennant of the God of Love called *Kama.* In India the name of *Siva* is Kameswaran. He is the Lord of Supreme Desire. LIfe is the means by which secular love is gradually spiritualised. The symbol of love is woman. Rumi says:

"Woman is a ray of God: she is not the earthly
beloved;
She is creative: You might say she is not
created."

So, sweep aside the veil of form. Behold in woman the eternal Beauty. She is the medium through which Beauty reveals itself and exercises creative activity. Contemplate Him in her.

In this light, the first stanza of the *Tirukkovaiyar* is the preamble to *Siva-Kama-Veda.*

So far so good. The question is whether this type of interpretation can ever forge its way with any measure of consistency. I am afraid, I cannot weave out a paradigmatic narrative which will be at once esoteric and orderly. No doubt, the immanence of esotery in the *Tirukkovaiyar* is indisputable. But it is not given to lesser mortals to explicate it.

The Hero and the Heroine

Lover's odyssey is the theme of every *Kovai*-work. The unnamed lovers are its hero and heroine. Besides these, yet another person will be hailed by the work. He may be a prince or a patron. He is usually called பாட்டுடைத் தலைவன், the hero in whose glory the work has been indited. In certain instances the work may sing the glory of even an inanimate object, such as a town or a temple or even an institution.

The hero in the *Tirukkovaiyar*, one school maintains, is St.Manickavachakar and the heroine is Lord *Siva*. I was also of this view. Another school asserts that it is Lord *Siva* who is the hero and St.Manickavachakar is the heroine. I am now of the humble opinion that neither *Siva* nor Manickavachakar is the hero or the heroine. A peerless pair of ardent lovers, whose devotion to Lord *Siva* and His shrine at Chidambaram is at once irreproachable and unexcellable, are the hero and the heroine. Apart from these, that which is celebrated in this work is *Tiruchitrambalam*, the shrine par excellence of Lord *Siva*. According to Nacchinarkkiniyar *Ambalam* is the place where many witness a dance.

Arangam is the place where a drama is enacted. At Srirangam, Vishnu enacts the drama of life and holy ones are blissfully thrilled to witness it. At *Ambalam* in *Tillai*, the Lord dances His cosmic dance.

"Life abiding in the tabernacle of flesh
Can sure attain its goal, the end of embodiment,
If it adores the golden feet of the Dancer
Who enacts the dance -- great and grand --,
In *Tillai* dight with flowery gardens melliferous."

Thus spake my deity, St. Sekkizhar.

Tillai Chitrambalam is the human heart. "Hallowed be the feet of Him who parts not from my heart for so much as the time an eye takes to twinkle *(இமைப் பொழுதும் என் நெஞ்சில் நீங்காதான் தாள் வாழ்க)* are the words of St. Manickavachakar.

"And chiefly thou O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure!"

This refers only to *Tiruchitrambalam*. The ether of ens is *Chitrambalam;* the ether of Ens Entium is *Perambalam*.

Rasas in the *Tirukkovaiyar*

"Raso vai sah" says Dr.K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, "is an upanishadic affirmation." "All life is Rasa" says Mahakavi Bharati. Tolkappiyar speaks of eight Rasas *(Meippadu)*, they being (1) Mirth, (2) Compassion, (3) Repugnance, (4) Wonder, (5) Fear, (6) Heroism, (7) Wrath and (8) Love.

நகையே யழுகை யிளிவரல் மருட்கை
அச்சம் பெருமிதம் வெகுளி உவகை யென்று
அப்பா லெட்டே மெய்ப்பா டென்ப.

Fear is portrayed in stanzas 176 and 253, Wonder in Stanza 33, Compassion in Stanza 102 and Love in Stanzas 1 and 400.

Peace *(Shanti)* is hailed as the greatest of all Rasas. This is not referred to by the *Tolkappiyam*. However it is included in the post-Tolkappiyam Tamil works.

Peace is portrayed in stanzas 387 and 388 of the *Tirukkovaiyar*. Repugnance, Mirth and Heroism can be gleaned from stanzas 382 and 390, stanza 399, stanzas 63, 216 and 245, and stanzas 171, 386 and 387.

All the Rasas of the *Tirukkovaiyar* lift the reader from the superficial to the real meaning of the poem, and sooner or later, the *Rasika* will turn a *Sadhaka* and get plunged in the infinite sufficiency of the all-inclusive Love of God.

The Message

From "eros" which is "the hot and unendurable desire," to "storge" which is family affection, and from storge to "philia" which is physical and more than physical love, and from philia to "agape" which is "unconqúerable benevolence, invincible goodwill, "*Tirukkovaiyar* is the recordation of the odyssey of love. None can miss its message, as poetry after all, it is said, "can communicate before it is understood."

The heroine is the symbol of Love that transforms, transfigures and totally transmutes. The *Tirukkovaiyar* does not think of Man finally submitting to the power of Love; it thinks of him as finally surrendering to the love of Love.

Love in its sublime state is the very nature of God. Is not God but Ananda, the Bliss of Love? The heroine in the *Tirukkovaiyar* is a symbol of the Bliss of Love. Hers is a universal love; a sacrificial love; a saving and sanctifying love; a sustaining and strengthening love; an inseparable and ineluctable love; a reward-

ing and chastening love. It is untainted by "mismos" (hatred). It is awful and grand, lofty and noble, sublime and beautiful, elevating and edifying, pure and ambrosial, transcending and transmuting, sincere, innocent, generous, forbearing, forgiving and is full of the peace that surpasseth understanding.

Translation -- *Tirukkovaiyar*

"The life and surroundings" says Sri Aurobindo "in which Indian poetry moves cannot be rendered in the terms of English poetry. Yet to give up the problem and content oneself with tumbling out the warm, throbbing Indian word to shiver and starve in the inclement atmosphere of the English language seems to me not only an act of literary inhumanity and a poor-spirited confession of failure, but a piece of laziness likely to defeat its own object."

Truer words were perhaps never spoken. Translators are not to be daunted by difficulties. "Difficulties are after all given us in order that we may brace our sinews by surmounting them."

I am happy to note that these are days when translation of even Tamil grammatical works is encouraged *Cilappatikaram*, *Manimekalai*, *Patthu-p-pattu*, *Kuruntokai* and a goodly portion of Sankam Literature have been Englished in the recent past, and what is more, with commendable success. I am therefore emboldened to contribute my mite towards the dissemination of Tamil Classics.

I must, in passing, say that I have dared to do that which has hitherto been considered impossible of performance. This is not a note of arrogance but one of joy. The *Tirukkovaiyar* appears in an English garb for the first time.

About twelve years ago, Sri.K.Somasundaram Pillai,

a scholar of great merit, called on me and said that I should take up the *Tirukkovaiyar* for translation. He said that my translation of Triloka-Sitaram's *Gandharva Ganam* had come off well and that I had come by the needed proficiency to translate Tamil classics. I felt flattered by his sincere encomium. However I resolved not to "rush in" at the mere sight of encouraging signs. I had waited for over a decade to equip myself properly. Meanwhile I engaged myself assiduously in the work of translation. My translations of St.Sekkizhar, St.Umapati and Mahakavi Bharati were not unwelcome to the discerning public.

When all is said and done, it has to be admitted that translation in certain instances can be treason, as felt by the ancient Greeks. When nothing worthwhile is conveyed by a work of translation, it is nothing but an infliction. If however a translator is able to communicate even a modicum of the culture or glory or greatness of a language and its people, he has not laboured in vain.

As a translator my vote is cast in favour of literalness. However in instances like the present work, I do know that the letter, more often than not, kills. My rendering is not therefore strictly literal. Neither have I sacrificed literalness for the sake of convenience. My goal is communicableness coupled with a more than substantial fidelity to the spirit of the original. My aim has been inspired by the Greek adage: "*Pleon hemisu pantos*" (Half is more than all). The word-order of the original defies reproduction in an uninflected language. I closely follow the original as far as practicable. Even the coloratura descriptions of the original are mirrored in my translation. Again what is implicit, has been made explicit by me. The translation is in *vers libre*, as much wrestling for accommodation had to be done by me, alas unaided. In my own way I think I have achieved a fairly precise rendering which must account for a greater readability.

Richard Scheimann, the translator of Martin Buber's "Konigtum Gottes" (Kingship of God), says: "He himself (Martin Buber) asked that I translate as literally as possible. This I have done even when it makes the English rather clumsy."

At the risk of sounding quaint and even grotesque, I have literally rendered almost all the ideas and expressions peculiar to the genius of the Tamil tongue.

The elephant and the peacock play a rich role in our nature poetry. These have, according to Sri Aurobindo, "become almost impossible in English poetry, because the one is associated with lumbering heaviness and the other with absurd strutting. The tendency of the Hindu mind on the other hand is to seize on what is pleasing and beautiful in all things and turn to see a charm where the English mind sees a deformity and to extract poetry and grace out of the ugly. The classical instances are the immortal verses in which Valmiki by a storm of beautiful and costly images and epithets has immortalised the hump of Manthara and the still more immortal passage in which he has made the tail of a monkey epic."

In Tamil as well as Sanskrit, the reader will do well to remember, the eyes of a woman are as large as the sea; they roll like fish; they are so long that they touch the ears. Again the woman's waist is thin to the point of invisibility; it does not even exist; her shoulders are bamboo-like; her hair is plaited with honey-laden flowers buzzed over by bees and beetles; her face is moon-like or it is mistaken for a lotus by a bee. The hero is a tusker, a bull, a lion; he is ever decorated with a dangling garland sought by bees; he is armed with a sharp spear the leafy head of which is tipt with gory flesh. Tamil poetry abounds in stock comparisons. When the poets use them they somehow import a touch of their own. Thus in hoary Tamil Nadu, "What was actually a mode of life later became a

custom and finally crystallized into a hallowed poetic convention which was followed in poetry even when the custom became obsolete." Let us tarry here for a moment and reflect: Do we Indians now-a-days wear turbans? Yet this is no bar for our enjoying the words of Milton viz., "Dusk faces with white silken turbans wreathed."

Dr.G.U.Pope, a close student of Tamil, would never denigrate the poetic conventions of Tamil. On the contrary, he felt a rapture when he delved into the mystery behind them. He felt happy to acquaint himself with the fragrant role that flowers played in Tamil literature. He even wanted the Westerners to share this joy with him. The ancient Tamil warriors wore certain flowers before they fared forth to the battle-field. Commenting on this, the great Doctor said: "This is to us a novel form of the language of flowers... These garlands were intended to strike terror into the eyes of the opposing hosts, and to some extent supplied the place of military uniform. The armies of Europe have never been unmindful of the moral effect of the soldier's head-dress, though it would be a novel experience if our troops went forth to war like a marching garden of flaming and fragrant flowers."

Flowers in any literature are justly celebrated for their fragrance and power of evocation. Their symbolic content is both great and natural. They speak the language of Nature. Ophelia tells Laertes:

"There's rosemary, that is for remembrance --
Pray you, love, remember -- and there's pansies,
that's for thoughts."

She turns to the King and says: "There's fennel for you, and columbines." To the Queen she says: "There's rue for you, and here's some for me, we may call it the herb of grace o' Sundays -- O, You must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy. I would

give you some violets, but they withered all, when my father died -- they say a' made a good end --."

From a careful perusal of the notes furnished by John Dover Wilson, we can arrive at the following equations:

Rosemary	= remembrance;
Fennel	= flattery;
Columbines	= cuckoldry;
Rue (herb of grace)	= sorrow;
Daisy	= dissembling;
Violets	= faithfulness.

English poets have also adopted the poetic conventions of Latin, Greek and Italian. It is well known that Milton composed a moving monody to bewail a friend of his, who met with a watery grave. The poem opens thus:

"Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude,
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year."

Dr. Johnson adversely commenting on this poem said: ". . .. passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy . . . . Where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief."

About these scathing remarks of Dr.Johnson, K.Deighton observes: "With readers of mature taste they will go for little, or rather will provoke a smile of amused surprise." Deighton then proceeds to explain the Miltonic stance in the light of Masson's analysis and says: "If passion" runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions,"If passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls

upon Arethuse and Mincius," neither does passion perform such simple acts of literary art as the construction of clear sentences, the formation of lines and metres, or the invention of rhymes. Grief, in its first act, in poets as in other people, consumes itself in 'Ohs' and 'Ahs', in sobs and agitated gestures, in dull numbed musings, incoherent verbal bursts, pacings of the chamber through the weary night. To poets, however, as soon as there is a lull of comparative tranquillity, and aiding perhaps to bring on that lull, there comes the use of those artifices of expression which are with them hardly artifices any longer, but the very habits of their minds."

Thus we can see that the scathing amimadversion of Dr.Johnson notwithstanding, "Lycidas" continues to enjoy a well-merited popularity among scholars of English literature. Likewise ancient Tamil literature will continue to entertain and instruct willing votaries.

Tamil is not an easy language. And Tamil poems in the hoary past were addressed to the elect; the princes, the poets and the intellectual aristocrats. These then absorbed the message and flourished as living examples of Tamil culture. The commoner was happy to live within the circle of their effulgence and lead a life as influenced by the great.

I repeat Tamil is not an easy language. It takes painful years to master it. Mahakavi Bharati said:

"தமிழ் மொழிபோல் இனிது ஆவது எங்கும் காணோம்"

The word *avathu* is fraught with significance. The language becomes sweet to him who passionately cultivates it and in this sense alone, Tamil is sweet. I am of the humble opinion that the *Tirukkovaiyar* will enchant a profound scholar and not a superficial browser.

I commenced my translation of this great work

on 2-1-1983 and brought it to a successful close on 30-4-1983.

I believe I haven't served badly the *Tirukkovaiyar* and I do hope that my rendering is not a vapid version in verse.

Foot Notes

1. Bharati's Notes to the *Panchali Sapatam.*

2. Aurobindo.

3. Xavier Thaninayagam Adigal.

4. According to Vaiyapuri Pillai's reckoning.

5. Sir C.P.Ramaswami Iyer.

I. NATURAL UNION

1. Sight

The hero speaks:

Lotus of ever-increasing beauty,
Nelumboes of ever-increasing glory,
Colourful *Kumizh* bright that blooms
In the grove of Lord's *Tillai,*
Konku and goodly *Kantal:*
With these is wrought, her frame, as a garland
Of ever-increasing fragrance divine;
She is a lithe liana endowed
With the swan's own gait.
Behold her, beauteously blazing
Like *Kama's* victorious pennant.

Points of comparison:

Lotus = Face; Nelumboes = Eyes; Kumizh = Nose; Konku = Breast; Kantal = Hands.

All the flowers of the five regions (viz) Kurinchi, Mullai, Marutam, Neytal and Palai are here beheld in the heroine at once.

Lotus, *Nelumbo, Kumizh, Konku and Kantal* are respectively of Marutam, Neytal, Mullai, Palai and Kurinchi.

K.Balasundara Nayagar says that according to the Eedu commentary, Kurinchi is symbolic of Space, Palai of Fire, Marutam of Air, Neytal of Water and Mullai of Earth.

Nelumbo : A species of nelumbium; Pontedeira monochoriavaginalis; the blue Indian lily.

Kumizh : Gruelina parviflora

Konku : Hopea parviflora: Iron-wood of Malabar

Kantal : Gloriosa superba

cf. திரு அமர் தாமரை சீர்வளர் செங்கழு நீர்கொள் நெய்தல்
குரு அமர் கோங்கங் குராமகிழ் சண்பகங் கொன்றை
வன்னி
மரு அமர் நீள்கொடி மாட மலிமறை யோர்கள் நல்லூர்
உரு அமர் பாகத் துமையவள் பாகனை யுள்குதுமே.

-அப்பர்

The heroine is a riot of flowers.

cf. (i) "... Proserpin gathering flowers
Herself a fairer flower ...."

- Paradise Lost 4, 269-270.

(ii) "Rose in roses"

- Tennyson.

2. Doubt

The hero speaks:

Is she a messenger of *Yama?*
An accomplice of *Kama?*
Or a damsel of hoary *Tillai* peerless?
Or an innocent peafowl?
Again
What may her abode be?
Flower? Heavens? Water?
The nether world of the *Nagas?*
Who can ever tell?

Yama	:	The God of Death
Kama	:	The God of Love
Flower	:	Lotus; the abode of the Goddess of Wealth.
Heavens	:	Paradise
Water	:	Habitat of nymphs

Messenger of Yama:

cf. Death's form I formerly
Knew not; but now it's plain to me:
He comes in lovely maiden's guise,
With soul-subduing eyes.

– Kural, Tr. G.U.Pope.

cf. "Sita, who was like a highsouled peacock
With its gorgeous spread of wings"

– The Epic Beautiful, Tr. Dr.K.R.S.Iyengar.

3. Doubt Resolved

The hero speaks:

She who is like *Tillai*
The Lord of which is *Hara*
Who rides a galloping bull,
Winks her eyes -- weapons true;
Her feet rest on earth;
Her flowers pure do wilt.
O examining mind in anguish steept!
Fair and great are her breasts;
Slender is her waist;
Broad is her bamboo-like shoulder;
She isn't a goddess, sure.

She who is like Tillai ... *true:*

cf. "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah,
comely as Jerusalem, terrible with an army
of banners."

- Song of Solomon, 6-4.

Her eyes -- weapons true --:

cf. "battling eyes"

- Kural.

4. Desiring

The hero speaks:

That indeed is the broad forelap;
Those are the breasts;
O heart, why blabber in confusion?
With a bow wrought of hill
He brought low the hostile cities of foes;
He is the God of *Tillai*, my Lord;
He smote the opposing Sun-god
And knocked out his teeth.
Behold her like unto His *Pazhanam*,
The one that wears many bangles!
She is sure with a waist endowed.

The first four stanzas are of the species -- Kaikkilai, as neither is aware of either's love. In Aintinai, Kaikkilai has no role to play, stricto sensu. Yet as the traditional excellence relating to Sight-Doubt-Resolution, had to be expounded, Kaikkilai had been resorted to. Peruntinai which is void of decency, is here out of bounds.

Lines 7-8 :

Daksha conducted a sacrifice (yagna) and did not invite Siva to participate in it. His aim was to insult Lord Siva. The Sun-god was one of the participants of that unholy sacrifice. The sacrifice ended in a fiasco and the participants were duly punished. The punishment meted out to the Sun-god is referred to in stanzas 4, 60, 184, 234 and 270 of the Tirukkovaiyar.

5. Sensing Her Love by Looks

The hero speaks:

Serpentine and fulgurant is her waist
Whose eyes are weapons of war;
As they roll and roll, they cast a double witchery;
One glance causes pain and the other heals it.
He is my jewel, my nectar, my life;
He is the *Chintamani* of *Tillai*;
He is the Lord of the Gospels,
Imperceivable even by the skyey gods;
Illness is the lot of them that hail not His feet.

Serpentine:

cf. "Serpentining beauty"
- Robert Browning: "Andrea del Sarto".

Lines 3-4:

cf. "Two kinds are the looks of this damsel
whose eyes are dyed with collyrium; one is
the cause of malady and the other its remedy."

- Kural.

Chintamani : The wish-yielding celestial gem.

6. Hailing Providence

The hero speaks:

Like the rod cast in the eastern sea
That teems with conch and shell
Fitting into the yoke afloat on the western main,
The carp-eyed one, removed from her bevy
  at *Kailas*
Is brought forth to the Ancient One's *Tillai;*
I hail my Lord who wrought this (wonder).
Will I ever hail or hymn any other God?

When Nampi Aroorar beheld Paravai Nachiar for the first time, he was swept off his feet by her divine beauty.

"Who may she be" he wondered and mused thus:
"Is she a flowery twig of Karpaka tree?
Is she the great and glorious life of Kama?
Is she the holy of holies? Is she a liana wrought of
Bow, lily, coral, lotus and moon, as flowers,
Decked on top with a dark nimbus?
Is she a sheer marvel? Or grace of Siva, embodied?"
"Him she beheld" says St.Sekkizhar "by hoary
Providence prompted."

Lines 1-3:

This popular exemplum is found mentioned in the Perungkatha the Jivaka Chintamani and other important works in Tamil.

7. Union Willed

The hero speaks:

Seven are his worlds and eight his arms;
He of yore decreed my thraldom unto him;
She the gold, is like His *Puliyur;*
She who is ever surrounded by her playmates
Is now alone on this lofty hill;
This is indeed the work of Fate
O mind! gone is the pain that grieved you.
The hour is come for *Gandharva* Union.

Puliyur is Tillai, also known as Chidambaram.

The ancient Hindu law recognised eight forms of marriage, of which four were approved forms, and four unapproved. The approved forms were Brahma, Daiva, Arsha and Prajapatya. The unapproved forms were Asura, Gandharva, Rakshasa and Paisacha. The Gandharva marriage is the voluntary union of a youth with a damsel, which springs from desire and sensual inclination. The Madras High Court still holds the view that the Gandharva form of marriage is not obsolete in the State of Madras. Vide, Deivani Vs. Chidambaram, 1955 (1) M.L.J. 120.

Some scholars are of opinion that the union in Kalavu is not to be equated with Gandharva form of marriage, though in both instances, marriage has to be subsequently legalised by rituals. The basic note of Gandharva matrimonium appears to be passion. Though this is present in Kalavu-union, the accent is on Providence and not on passion.

8. Expressing the Joy of Union

The hero speaks:

Of this I am sure indeed: truly speaking,
She is nectar and I, the taste thereof;
Assuredly this is the work of kindly Providence.
I am she:
Who can comprehend the beauty of this felicity?
Our secret union was at the hill of *Potiyil*
The Lord of which is the Pure One of *Puliyur*.

Line 2:

cf. (i) "So they lov'd as love in twain
Had the essence but in one;
Two distincts, division none:
Number there in love was slain."

- Shakespeare: The Phoenix and Turtle.

(ii) "Let me confess that we two must be twain
Although our undivided loves are one."

- Shakespeare: Sonnet 36.

Line 4:

cf. (i) "Our spirits are one; you and I am one."

- Bharati.

(ii) "... Rosalind lacks then the love
Which teacheth thee that thou and I am one."

- As You Like It: 1, 3, 93-94.

(iii). "அன்னான் செய்ய வேயுயர் கானம் தானும்
தம்பியும் மிதிலைப் பொன்னும் போயி னான்"

Line 5:

-கம்பன்

cf. (i) "Property was thus appalled,
That the self was not the same;
Single nature's double name
Neither two nor one was called"

- Shakespeare: The Phoenix and Turtle.

(ii) "Saw division grow together,
To themselves yet either neither,
Simple were so well compounded,
That it cried: 'How true a twain
Seemeth this concordant one!"

- Ibid.

9. Continuance of Unabated Love

The hero speaks:

The Lord is realised by His own knowledge,
Not by *Pasu* or *Pasa* knowledge.
He is the Peerless One of *Tillai Chitrambalam.*
With lips red as *Kovvai* and liana-waist
Is she not the manifestation of His *Ananda?*
Union with her is a fresh marvel every time;
It for ever soars like the swelling hips
Of her of perfumed locks!

Lines 1 and 2 can be rendered thus:

"Once only is He realized
And not again and again."

The dictum which says that a woman is seduced only once, is full of truth. She stands defiled thereafter. Even so, divine bliss once achieved stays thereafter. It is unlike human joy which is either fugitive or fleeting. If God is realised once, it is once and for all; the perfect beatitude endures for ever.

Again these lines can be given a different interpretation: "The Lord is still beyond the reach of them who have realized all -- God excepted --, by askesis and meditation."

As sutra 11 of the Siva Gnana Botam says, God is realized by Godly Knowledge and not by any other means. Our saint says in the Tiruvachakam: "It is by His Grace we come by His Grace."

It is plain that the Lord is never to be comprehended by them who are deluded into thinking that they have realized Him.

Pasu Knowledge : Human knowledge; empirical knowledge.

Pasa Knowledge : Knowledge obtained through books inclusive of the scriptures.

10. Yearning for Love-Speech

The hero speaks:

Majestic are her huge breasts
Like the Immeasurable One's *Tillai Ambalam*;
Her large eyes are sword-like;
Her forehead is a chip of the moon;
Her waist is a flash of lightning;
Her shoulders large are like bamboo.
If these be her body's features
How then will her psittacine warbling be?

Line 5:

cf. "Our Kannamma's beauty is lightning-like."

- Bharati.

Line 8:

cf. "... the sweet music of speech"

- *William* Cowper.

11. Describing the Charm of the Lady-Love in Rapture

The hero speaks:

With snakes is He decked
Whose dance melts the very bones
Of His devotees who hail Him
With their beauteous hands folded.
Even as they wilt and waste who do not
Sing His *Tillai Ambalam*,
Her waist droops and languishes.
O bees, are there in your *maruta* realm
Ambal blossoms to match her lips
That are so fragrant and ripe and sweet?

Lines 8-10:

cf. (i) "O honey-bee, pretty-winged!
Your life is spent among pollen.
Now I charge you speak
With bias none,
What you have truly witnessed.
In your world of flowers,
Is there aught to match
The fragrance of the flowing tresses
Of this lovely lass
Of peacock-gait and teeth of lustre?
Boundless is her love and eternal."

- Kuruntokai, Tr. T.N.R.

(ii) "Nay but you, who do not love her,
Is she not pure gold, my mistress?
Holds earth aught -- speak truth -- above her?
Aught like this tress, see ..."

- Robert Browning,
- Dramatic Romances and Lyrics.

The hero's view can be summed up in the words of Romeo thus:

> "................The all-seeing sun.
> Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun."

Ambal : Water lily; Nymphaea pubescens

cf. *"ஆம்பலம் போது காட்டும்*
அணிதிகழ் பவளச் செவ்வாய்"

-நைடதம்

12. Intimation of Non-Parting

The hero speaks:

Will one value the less
Chintamani and oceanic nectar
Obtainable only through great tapas,
If one should get them without pain
Thanks to the grace of the Lord of *Tillai?*
O roe of beauteous eyes!
O peafowl with a doe's timid look!
O swan on lotus divine enthroned!
Can I ever part from you?
Why do you feel sorrow
And grieve me thus?

Line 2:

Chintamani is the celestial wish-yielding stone. The old commentary, however, says that it is the name of a munificent patron.

Line 8:

This may be a reference to Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth.

13. Sensing the Grief of the Beloved

The hero speaks:

He who shares His body with Her whose breasts
Are like the beauteous buds of konku,
Triumphed over the evil ones
By destroying their cities.
Why should she, who is like unto
His *Chitrambalam*, grieve so sore?
Does she think the parted
Are seldom reunited?
Or does she think that she would be stigmatized
Should she continue long to tarry here?
Alas, I stand bewildered.

Lines 1-4:

The following is an abstract from Muir, Vol. iv, p. 203.

"There were in the sky three cities of the Asuras, one of iron, another of silver, and a third of gold, which Indra could not demolish with all his weapons. Then all the great gods, distressed, went to Rudra (Siva) as their refuge, and said to him, after they were assembled: ".... Bestower of honour, destroy the Daityas with their cities, and deliver the worlds. He, being thus addressed, said, "So be it;" and making Vishnu his arrow, Agni its barb, Yama, the son of Vivasvat, its feather, all the Vedas his bow, and the excellent Savitri (the Gayatri) his bowstring, and having appointed Brahma his Charioteer, he in due time pierced through these cities with a three-jointed three-barbed arrow, of the colour of the sun, and in fierceness like the fire which burns up the world. These Asuras with their cities were there burnt up by Rudra."

The three cities, according to Tirumoolar, are symbolic of the three impurities (malas) of the soul.

14. Praising the Nature of Grace

The hero speaks:

Our union had been wrought by God,
O beauteous damsel like *Lakshmi!*
Who can ever come by prowess
To destroy this felicity?
  You adorn His garden of *Chitrambalam*
  Whose triple eyes are ever-wakeful;
  Your locks are freighted with lovely flowers;
  Wherefore should you feel grieved at all?

Line 6:

Surya (Sun), Chandra (Moon) and Agni (Fire) constitute the triple eyes of Lord Siva.

cf. நற் பகற் சோமன் எரி தரு நாட்டத்தன்

— The Tirukkovaiyar, 168.

15. Emphasising the Proximity of their Dwelling Places

The hero speaks:

He peeled off the hide,
Of the hill-like tusker,
He is the Lord of *Tillai Ambalam*.
O woman that resides in the hill in His *Potiyil* range,
O ear-ringed beauty, quit sorrow.
The subtle effulgence white that emanates
From the plastered mansion of our town
Girds as garment your black hill.

Line 1:

There once flourished a demon by name Gajasura, in the form of a tusker. He was the recipient of innumerable boons and he waxed puissant day by day, and was the terror of the celestials and the saints who eventually sought refuge in Siva enshrined in the holy city of Kasi (Varanasi). When the Asura thither came to tease them, even Parvati, the Consort of Siva, was scared by the horrendous form of the gargantuan tusker. Lord Siva smote the pachydermatous Asura and wore his hide as a garment.

cf. *"எண்திசையோர் அஞ்சிடுவகை கார்சேர் வரை யென்னக்*
கொண்டெழு கோலமுகில் போல் பெரிய கரிதன்னைப்
பண்டுரி செய்தோன்......"

-தேவாரம், *1053*.

16. Sending the Lady-Love Back to Her Play-Mates

The hero speaks:

With eyes like long bows, lips red as *Kovvai*
With teeth as pearls and face like the moon
You are like a liana sought by the bees.
Follow what I say with clarity.
Rejoin your mates and play.
He is the One of ever-increasing effulgence,
The peerless Lord of *Tillai;* in the slope of
His *Kailas*
The falling honey-drops course in a stream;
Thither will I hie and conceal myself
And be at your play-ground yonder, ere long.

Line 1:

Kovvai : "A climbing plant noted for its red edible fruit, to which the lips are compared in poetry."

- Winslow's Dictionary.

Line 3:

cf. "As the women sleep, the bees mistake them for flowers, and desire them"

- The Epic Beautiful, Tr. Dr.K.R.S.Iyengar.

17. The Hero Wondering at His Rare Good Fortune

The hero speaks:

He is the Creator of Heaven and Earth
And mountains too on earth;
He is the Ancient One who crowns my head
With His beauteous flower-feet twain.
What might the entry of this damsel be,
-- The one of fair locks with flowers decked --,
Into the garden of His *Tillai*
If her nature be such as this?
Is this magic? Or a dream?
I know not what?

The indescribable splendour of the heroine stuns the hero. "Is it thaumaturgy or somnium?" he wonders.

18. Coming to Know of the Confidante

The hero speaks:

"We share a single life; our mind is but one;
Our elders treat us with equal excellence."
Thus spake her javelin-eyes
That beauteous roll right upto her ears.
Verily, the confidante soft of speech, is her match.
He destroyed the skyey fortresses evil;
He is the Dancer at *Tillai Chitrambalam*;
She is indeed His own grace.

Line: 1

cf. *"யானென்று நீயென் றிருவகையோ நம்மிருவர்க்கும்*
ஊனொன் றுயிரொன் றுள மொன்றான துரையளவோ?"

-திருவாரூர்க் கோவை, 155.

Amidst the innumerable play-mates, the look of the lady-love is subtly cast on the one who is her alter ego.

Line: 6

See notes for stanza 13.

Line : 7

The Dancer at Tillai Chitrambalam: Lord Siva dances a mystic dance at Tillai. His five acts of grace, viz., creation, preservation, resolution, concealment and bestowal of grace constitute His ceaseless mystic dance. "Of this dance" says G.U.Pope, "the sacred Vedas know the excellence, but are not cognizant of its cause, its time, its place, its full intention. In the forest of Taruvanam, in the midst of the Rishis, the gods beheld it; but, because this is not the world's centre, it trembled beneath His foot. In sacred Tillai which is the exact centre of the universe, this dance is finally revealed."

II. THE ROLE OF THE CONFIDANT

1. Remembering the Confidant

The hero speaks:

In *Puliyur* in the south
Rich in flowers and babbling steams,
My Lord doth dance willingly;
Unto His lotus-feet is he dedicated
The one that is my second self.
If I to him the matter disclose,
Who can then prevent my union with her,
Who is a perfect picture of bashfulness? (19)

Lines 6-8:

As things come to a standstill, the hero thinks of his friend. Kahlil Gibran says: "Your friend is your needs answered." A true friend unbosoms freely, advises justly, assists readily, adventures boldly, takes all patiently, defends courageously, and continues a friend unchangeably.

2. The Confidant's Query

The confidant of the hero speaks:

In exalted *Chitrambalam* (pure)
Girt with protective waters
And in my chinta (not so pure)
Is He equally enshrined.
  Did you in His walled city *Maturai*
  Where Tamil was scanned (by scholars great),
  Plunge into the depths of sweet Tamil beauteous?
  Or were you drawn to the orbit music sevenfold?
  O my king, what ails you?
  What is wrong with your hill-like shoulders now? (20)

Line 3:

Chinta : Heart as the seat of affection. It is the mind-heart.

Line 8:

Music sevenfold: An idea of the ancient Tamil musical scale can be gleaned from Cilappatikaram, a Tamil classic. Its author -- a born prince and a prince of poets --, introduces the muscial scale when describing a dance performed by a group of seven girls. These seven bear the very names of the musical notes, they being, Kural *(குரல்)*, Tuttham *(துத்தம்)*, Kaikkilai *(கைக்கிளை)*, Uzhai ( ), Ili *(இளி)*, Vilari *(விளரி)*, and Taram *(தாரம்)*. The septet is divided into 22 mattirais. It can thus be seen that the ancient Tamils knew all about π (pi) which is 22/7. We are told, when a division of 22 by 7 is attempted, even a computer breaks down. No wonder the student of Tamil music gets famished as he exercises himself in tracking the infinite ramifications of music.

Poet Triloka Sitaram in his Gandharva Gānam, speaks of the seven goddesses of music *(ஏழிசைப் பெண்டிர்)* materialising from the music of Yazh.

3. Disclosing the Affaire

The hero speaks:

Like the peacock that tears the hood of a king-cobra
That can smite an elephant,
Not stirring out in quest of its prey
Scared by the chameleon,
She whose eyes are shy as the antelope's,
The one who is *damaruka*-waisted, languishes
Under the burden of her swelling breasts;
She has clean destroyed my prowess;
Yes, the prowess of one who wears
On his crown the golden lotus-feet
Of Lord *Siva* at *Tillai*. (21)

Damaruka : A little drum, shaped like an hour-glass.

Lines 3-4:

the king-cobra . . . an elephant:

cf. (i) *"சிறு வெள் ளரவி னவ்வரிக் குருளை*
கான யானை யணங்கி யாங்கு"

-குறுந்தொகை, 119:1-2

(ii) *"அஞ்சனக் கோலின் ஆற்றா நாகமோ ரருவிக் "குன்றிற்*
குஞ்சரம் புலம்பிவீழக் கூர்நுதியெயிற்றிற் கொல்லும்"

-சீவக சிந்தாமணி, 1894

The hero's lament is similar to the one contained in the Kural (1088) which is as follows:

ஒண்ணுதற் கோஒ உடைந்ததே ஞாட்பினுள்
நண்ணாரு முட்குமென் பீடு

"Ah woe is me! my might,
That awed my foemen in the fight,
By lustre of that beaming brow
Borne down, lies broken now."

- Tr. G.U.Pope.

4. The Retort of the Confidant

The confidant speaks:

Embodiment and disembodiment
He set at nought, and had on us
Conferred life eternal.
  When the celestials implored Him
  The Ancient One turned into nectar
  The poison in His throat.
Can you feel grieved at all
That in His mango-grove at *Kailaṣ*
A woman with a liana-waist
Not meaning to cause any pain
Cast on you her looks as of a fawn's?
  O my generous friend, grieve not. (22)

Line 5:

Turned into nectar ... throat: To save the celestials and others too, Lord Siva drank the poison "Aalahala". He retained it in His throat. Hence the name Nilakanta, the blue-throated.

cf. "ஆலம் ஒன்றும் அமுதென்று பண்டமுது செய்யும் ஐயர்"

-தக்கயாகப் பரணி, 650-

5. The Rejoinder of the Hero

The hero speaks:

Golden mansions of *Tillai Chitrambalam*
Blaze their glory to great distances;
There, the One ruby-like, doth dance.
My peafowl dwells in *Kailas* in the north;
This bejewelled fair-breasted beauty is my life;
She, my liana, is a picture wrought of gold;
You haven't beheld her, the soft-shouldered one
Sweet as sugar-cane;
Had you but seen her (once)
You would not speak thus. (23)

The heroine in the words of Shakespeare is a "bright angel." The hero's grievance is that his friend had not beheld this "mortal paradise of such sweet flesh."

Line 6:

The message is that those who have seen her must admit that she is "pure gold." The hero talks like Romeo who said: "He jests at scars that never felt a wound."

6. The Confidant Speaks Again

The confidant speaks:

Even when great hills were by the wind
Shattered to smithereens,
And heaven and earth thrown into confusion
By raging breakers,
You would remain unruffled.
How is it, that you now tremble like them
That are unblest by the Lord of *Chitrambalam*
Crowned with fragrant *konrai* wreath?
Dear patron, what may this be? (24)

Lines 1-5:

"O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken."

- Shakespeare.

Konrai : Cassia: Caesalpineae.

7. Declaring the Strange Deprivation of Strength

The hero speaks:

Endowed with excellence, sovereign and supreme,
I haven't suffered the slackening of my will;
None can accuse me as one jostled out of sense;
I have myself consoled and composed the distressed;
Lo, now am I all bewildered
By the looks of a pretty gazelle that sports
In Mount *Kailas*, the Lord of which
Wears a lovely little crescent in His crown. (25)

The word "salbu" here translated as "excellence, sovereign and supreme" is truly untranslatable. Excellence, character, nobility, nature, frame of mind and bearing are all included in this word. According to Dr.G.U. Pope it is "fulness", "perfection", "complete excellence."*

"Salbu" according to Thiruvalluvar rests on the five pillars wrought by Love, Sense of Shame (Honour), Law, Mercy (Compassion) and Truth.

Lines 5-8:

cf. "O sweet Juliet
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate
And in my temper soften'd valour's steel."

- Shakespeare.

8. Vexed with Destiny

The hero speaks:

"The buds of *konku* which swell
On my 'vibrant lightning' could kill me."
He thinks and says thus -- my friend.
So am I ashamed, and greatly grieved
As a result of my past deeds of evil,
Like theirs that adore not His *Tillai*
Who wrought a bow out of the *Meru* Mount.
The piety of my past lives
Hasn't fructified, alas! (26)

Buds of Kongku : Breasts of the heroine.

Vibrant lightning : The heroine.

cf. *"மின்னனைய நுண்மருங்குல்"*

-பெரிய திருமொழி, 3, 9:5.

The reader may, in this context, contemplate with advantage, the import of sutra 137 of Manavala Mamuni's Aacharya Hridayam:

*"மயில் பிறை வில் அம்பு முத்து பவளம் செப்பு மின்
தேர் அன்னம் தெய்வவுரு, விகாசசுத்தி தாந்தி
ஞான ஆனந்த அனுராக பக்தி அனுத்வ போக்யதா
கதிகளையுடைய அகமேனியின் வகுப்பு."*

9. The Friend Speaks Pained

The confidant speaks:

Though nectar should lose its virtue
And seasonal rains fail,
You'll not swerve from your golden path of virtue;
By reason of her beauty that is like unto
Tillai Ambalam whose King turned poison into nectar,
When even you are oblivious of your deportment
I can blame nought but my past evil deeds. (27)

Lines 1-3:

cf. "பாஅல் புளிப்பினும் பகல் இருளினும்
நாஅல் வேதநெறி திரியினும்
திரியாச் சுற்றமொடு"

-புறநானூறு.

Deportment : conduct: The hero's way of life was that of a patron renowned for his munificence.

10. Enquiring into (her) Nature and Dwelling-Place

The confidant speaks:

O lord of mountain, thus is now your nature become;
Even so are you; of my state what can I
Who endeavoured to compose you, say?
What may be her abode, who had
Reduced you to this plight?
Is it the vast mount of Him at *Tillai*,
The King with three beauteous eyes?
Or the lotus-blossom? Or the heavens?
Again, what may her nature be? (28)

Lines 4-5:

cf. "Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness."

- The Two Gentlemen of Verona, 3: 1: 44-45.

11. Disclosing (her) Nature and Dwelling

The hero speaks:

By her looks, she is an antelope;
By her mien, a peafowl;
By her soft words, a parakeet.
His anklets are ever inseparable
From the congeries of celestial crowns,
The crowns of the First of the celestials
and his train;
He is the dancer at *Tillai;*
In his mount *Kailas* honey courses down
Rolling pearls through the grove
That my tutelary goddess adorns. (29)

The First of celestials : Lord Indra.

Tutelary goddess : The Lady-Love.

12. Assurance by the Confidant

The confidant speaks:

O lord of mountain, I'll sure behold her, a *Kuyil*,
The one that is a lithe twig
And wears a pair of anklets,
The black-eyed red-lipped beauty
That keeps watch over the millet-field in *Kailas*
The Lord of which is the Dancer of *Tillai*.
There she sports with her friends
Who are like unto flowery lianas,
And their frolic in the marmoreal halls
Is by the hills reverberated.
This done, I'll come back. (30)

Kuyil : Kokila: Edynamys Indicus. The indian Kuyil is not to be identified with the English cuckoo. The cuckoo is a bird of ill-omen. The Kuyil is not so.

Line 5:

Beauty : The word in the original is peacock.

13. Proceeding as Directed

The confidant speaks:

He would not tremble when the wind would blow fierce
At the end of the Yuga, uprooting
The seven *kulaparvatas* and the worlds seven;
Even he did quake when he beheld
Her slender waist and eyes like venom-tipt javelin.
Would she fare forth in the millet-field
Made cool by the shade, cast by the vast
Nimbus-crested grove in the mountain
Of the Lord of *Tillai*? (31)

Line 3:

Kula parvatas : The seven great mountains which keep the earth stable.

Line 5:

Eyes .... javelin:

cf. (i) "An eye can threaten like a loaded and
levelled gun ..."
- Emerson

(ii) "An eye like Mars, to threaten and command."
- Shakespeare.

14. The Beholding

The confidant speaks:

These are the eyes like tender mango cleft in two;
This is the waist that puts the liana to shame;
The quivering lips are coral;
Here she is as the lord of the hills described her.
For ever am I devoted to His flowery feet
Adored by the heavenly lords.
She is like unto His *Ambalam;*
The soft-spoken is sure the Lady-love. (32)

Line 1:

Eyes like .... mango : The two symmetrically slit slices of a tender mango resemble the eyes.

cf. "மாவடு வகிர் அன்ன கண்ணி"

-திருவாசகம்

Line 2:

Waist ..... shame : The liana is supposed to be in awe of the waist, as the latter outstrips its glory and beauty.

15. Hero Admired

The confidant speaks;

The *Ambalavan's* throat is like lily blue;
Her limbs of commanding beauty
Strike terror in *Lakshmi*, seated on the lotus
That resembles His resounding ankleted feet.
Lo, he could part from this damsel
And come to me to say so much of her;
The lord of elephant -- my friend, is sure
The most stout-hearted in all the sea-girt world.
(33)

Lines 7-8:

cf. (i) *தலங்காவலன் தஞ்சை வாணன் முந்நீர் பொரும்*
தண்பொருந்தத்
திலங்கார வல்வடக் கொங்கை வெற்பால் இணைநீல
உண்கண்
பொலங்காம வல்லி கடைந்த அப்போது புடை பெயர்ந்து
கலங்காதிருந்த தெவ்வாறு எம்பிரான்தன் கலைக்கடலே
-தஞ்சை வாணன் கோவை, 54.

(ii) "He's thrown apart from Sita's company,
Yet Ramа somehow lives on;
He hasn't succumbed to sorrow; it's a feat
Of heroic endurance."

- The Epic Beautiful, Tr. Dr.K.R.S.Iyengar.

16. Describing What He Saw

The confidant speaks:

O wielder of the bright spear
Whose leaf is tipped with flesh!
In a fragrant garden at the golden *Kailas*
Of the Lord of *Chitrambalam*
Whose waist-cord is a sérpent
With its hood facing downward,
I beheld a she-elephant of fair rolling eyes
Like unto tender mango cleft in two
Fixed on its tusker which had from it
Parted (but recently) after mating. (34).

Line 7:

cf. "காதல் மடப்பிடி"

-அப்பர்.

17. Extolling its Splendour

The confidant speaks:

O chief of mountain, there is
A pair of carps on a lotus blossom;
Behind coral rich are two rows
Of pearls uniformly bright;
There is a pair of caskets
Very like the Lord's *Ambalam*;
On black *nimbi* is a wreath of flowers
All these I beheld on a slender creeper. (35)

Carps : Eyes;

Lotus blossom : Face;

Coral : Lips;

Pearls : Teeth;

Nimbi : Hair;

Creeper : The Lady-love.

cf. *வாவி கண்டேன் மலர்ச்சோலை கண்டேன் மருங்கே மருங்கில்*
பாவி கண்டேன் முலைப்பாரங் கண்டேன் பனிநீரரும்பும்
காவி கண்டேன் கண்ட நின்வழியே தன்கருத்து வைத்த
ஆவி கண்டேன் கண்டிலேன் அண்ணலே நின் அறிவின்மையே.

-அம்பிகாபதிக்கோவை, 63.

18. Going Thither

The hero speaks:

If she be like *Tillai* the Lord of which
Set ablaze with a smile the triple forts,
If her speech is like the *Kuyil's* warbling,
If cool pearls are beheld behind *kovvai* lips,
If spears sharp are set on a lotus blossom
And if a peafowl is espied
Walking with the graceful gait of a swan,
Surely it is my very life everduring. (36)

Line 7:

Swan : The reader is requested to consult sutra 151 of Acharya Hridayam, for the esoteric meaning of 'swan'.

*"விவேக முகராய், நூலுரைத்து, அள்ளலில் ரதி இன்றி,
அணங்கின் நடையைப் பின்சென்று, குடை நீழலிலே
கவரி அசையச் சங்கமவை முரல வரிவண்டு இசைபாட
மாநச பத்மாசனத்திலே இருந்து, விதியினால்,
இடரில், அந்தரமின்றி, இன்பம் பட, குடிச் சீர்மை
யிலேயாதல் பற்றற்ற பரமஹம்சராதல் ஆன
நயாசலன், மெய்ந்நாவன், நாதயாமுநர் போல்வாரை
அன்னம் என்னும்."*

19. The Lightning-Waisted Wilts

The Lady-Love speaks:

"Dear one who's like my very life, grieve not;
I'll not from you part." Thus did he, dear as my
  life,
Console me, and lo, he had disappeared.
Is he heart-broken or baffled, by excessive love?
  The Lord of *Ambalam* is indeed my life.
  At the foot of His *Kailas*, to others inaccessible,
  Sport my friends dear to me as mine own life.
  Would he ever thither come at all? (37)

Line 4:

cf. "Or perhaps, the great warrior, Rama
  . . . .
  O'ercome by grief has retired to heaven
    leaving his body on earth."

- The Epic Beautiful, Tr. Dr. K.R.S. Iyengar.

20.Rejoicing at the Sight of the Garden

Behold these! The pair of bamboos,
The joyous peafowl,
The sapphire gems of lustre,
The beauteous buck and his roe
And the lissom liana too.
This grove of *Kailas* the Lord of which
Is sempiternal *Ambalavan*
Who wears as ear-rings a pair of snakes
Where sports my love of long back tresses
Is very like my beloved, the wearer of
honied wreath. (38)

The bamboos are likened to her shoulders; the peacock reminds him of her mien; the blue gems resemble in hue, her hair; the eyes of the deer are like her eyes; the liana is like unto her waist.

21. "Is this My Life" Wonders He

The hero speaks:

It gave me pridian joy of union in love;
Then it parted from me loveless, breaking my heart;
'Tis now amidst its play-mates;
It is nectar; it is a nymph that grieves me;
'Tis lustrous as *Siva's Ambalam;*
It is enthroned in my chinta;
'Tis all magic, beyond analysis,
This everduring life of mine.
Behold it in my Lady-love standing here. (39)

Nymph that grieves me : Ananku is the Tamil word. It refers to a celestial woman according to Parimelazhakar.

Chinta : The seat of thought; here affection.

Perasiriyar, the great commentator, gives a Saiva Siddhantic interpretation to this stanza.

22. Freed of Fatigue

The hero speaks:

She would not gather flowers rich in pollen;
Neither would she play with the bright beauteous
ball
When her friends would watch her adoring,
with folded hands;
She would not in the pool bathe in delight;
She who is the celestial *Karpaka*-tree all flowery
Hath quit the skyey world denuding it of its glory
And walks on earth,
Her golden feet touching the earth;
I know not, what kind of askesis is to be wrought
By her on this Mount of *Ambalavan*. (40)

Line 9:

Askesis : Tapas. Askesis is that training which converts one into an ascetic, according to Ortegean concept. See page 47, The Revolt of the Masses, by Ortega Y Gasset, Mentor Series, 1951.

"Tapas" says Dr.Ananda K.Coomaraswamy, "is fervour, ardour, glowing; never "penance" in the sense of expiation." For further explanation, see page 116, Heinrich Zimmer's 'Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization' edited by Joseph Campbell, Bollingen Series VI, 1963.

23. Pining for (Her) Words

The hero speaks:

O antelope-eyed! I'm assailed by doubt;
You look like *Lakshmi* throned on the lotus red
Beauteous to behold.
At fecund *Tillai* is the Lord whose throat is
Made lovely by the blue blossom.
If you ope not your lips a little, to clarify this,
O nectar, o celestial nymph, will not my life
Suffer and perish? (Speak that I may flourish). (41)

Line 5:

The blue blossom : The reference is to the blue lily which resembles in hue the poison that is held by the Lord in His throat.

24. Covering Her Eyes with Palms in Bashfulness

The Lady-Love speaks:

The celestial one that measured the worlds,
Knows Him to be the adorable One and worships
Him of *Ambalam*, who rides a bull that doth
Canter triumphant through all hostile regions.
They that worship Him not are bound to suffer;
That my life should not languish likewise
O flowery liana of the grove,
I seek refuge in you. (42)

Line 1:

refers to Vishnu

cf. "பாடிமால் புகழும் பாதமே அல்லால்
பற்று நான் மற்றறியேன்"

-திருவாசகம்

(Those feet alone I seek that Vishnu
In songs extolled ....)

- The Tiruvachakam.

25. Sorrowing When She Covers Her Eyes

The hero speaks:

He bestows grace on them that press their heads
At His feet in adoration, and makes them
Celestial lords by the heavenly hosts encircled;
O gold, by covering your sharp javelin-eyes
You've caused my life to flourish, unlike the lives
Of those that wilt, not adoring *Ambalam's* Lord.
O damsel of forehead bright! If it be your desire
That my mind should tremble not,
Cover your body in full. (43)

"Covering the eyes in bashfulness" (நாணிக்கண் புதைத்தல்) is one of the topics of Kovai literature. Amrita Kavirayar has composed 400 stanzas on this topic alone.

26. The Lady-Love Regrets Her Shedding of Bashfulness

The Lady-Love speaks:

Let me not be born hereafter
Like them that adore not the Dancer at *Tillai*
Circled by flowery groves and gardens bright.
Alas, it was like the pupil of mine eyne,
It was like unto my very life,
Inseparable it grew with me as I grew;
That rare gracious modesty
Like wax before fire melts and wastes away. (44)

நாணம் is bashful modesty.

cf. (i) "..... Her beauty and her wit
Her affability and bashful modesty"

- Taming of the Shrew.

(ii) "Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness?"

- A Midsummer Night's Dream.

27. Nearing the Lady-Love

The hero speaks:

Like unto the act of them that climb
Onto the beauteous branch at the top
And whittle it down, is (the work of) her breasts;
This we are unable to know at all.
She is like *Siva's Tillai;* oh bees, it will not become you
If you mean to settle on her coiffure
Driven by a desire for the honey-drops
Unmindful of her waist, thin as a thread. (45)

The chopping of the branch, like the breasts breaking the waist, is suicidal.

28. Indispensable is the Lady-Love

The hero speaks:

Even if I come by the vast Heaven
Of the Lord of *Chitrambalam* whose feet
The inseparable anklets of gold, adorn
And also the entire sea-girt earth,
I canst not forget my thraldom to her breasts
Packed with the juice of sugarcane
Sweet honey and nectar too,
And standing triumphant, having vanquished
Sweet cane and auric casket of ivory. (46)

Line 8:

cf. "செப்பு ஆர் முலை"

-திருவாசகம்

In an esoteric sense, breasts represent knowledge, phenomenal as well as celestial.

29. Sending Her Back to the Bevy of Companions

The hero speaks:

My dear life is a slave unto you
Who are like *Tillai* girt with gardens
The God of which is the crest-jewel of the
  supernal lords.
O nectar rare, seraph celestial,
Ruby unpierced, antelope gracious,
Of what avail are many words?
Now may you join your sweet company
Who sport in the garden of beauteous blossoms (47)

"the bevy of belles" -- playmates of the heroine --, is symbolic of the divine throng of devotees.

30. The Sorrow of the Hero

The hero speaks:

If I part from the flowery field
Watched over by her, it is distressing
Like the pain of those false ones, farthest from *Siva;*
If I be with her, it is like
His *ambalam's* close and comforting presence
To the true;
Such is she with bright eyes collyrium-tinct,
Whose breasts are decked with jewels of pearls,
And whose *alkul* is a cobric hood bright. (48)

Lines 1-5:
cf. "To those who draw not nigh, He gives no boon,
to those who draw nigh, all good:
the great Cankaran knows no dislike."

– The Tiruvarutpayan, Tr. Dr. G.U.Pope.

Alkul : In Tamil literature which suffers not from Victorian prudery, the pudendum mulibre is likened to the bright hood of a cobra, dreadful and hypnotic at once. In the esoteric sense the cobra stands for Kundalini Sakti which Arthur Avalon translates as "The Serpent Power." The word 'Alkul' refers to that part of the body where the garment is fastened (இருப்புறுப்பு). It is the lower belly. By suggestion it refers to the male or the female member. Alkul is common to man and woman as is made clear by the following hymn of St.Kumara Gurupara.

செவ்வாய்க் கருங்கண் பைந் தோகைக்கும்
வெண்மதிச் சென்னியர்க்கும்
ஒவ்வாத் திருவுரு ஒன்றே உளது
அவ்வுருவினை மற்று
எவ்வாச்சியம் என்றெடுத்து இசைப்பேம்
இன்னருட் புலியூர்
பைவ்வாய் பொறியரவு 'அல்குல் எந்தாய்'
என்று பாடுதுமே.

III. THE HERO'S MEETING HIS BELOVED WITHOUT HIS CONFIDANT'S HELP

1. To the Trysting Garden

The hero speaks:

This union was not brought forth
By my conscious effort; 'twas the gift of Fate;
The self-same Fate that fosters
The ever-during way of love, is there
To bless me with union if I still essay.
O heart, grieve not; I'll wend my way thither
Where the ocean-waves that lave *Tillai* vast
-- Whose God is a Dancer and whose matted locks
Put to shame, lightning --,
Wash ashore gold into the garden
Capped by nimbi with lightning-flashes. (49)

Fate : Goressio, the Italian translator of Valmiki's Ramayana says: "The idea of fate was different in India from that which prevailed in Greece. In Greece fate was a mysterious, inexorable power which governed men and human events, and from which it was impossible to escape. In India fate was rather an

> inevitable consequence of actions done in births antecedent to one's present state of existence, and was therefore connected with the doctrine of metempsychosis. A misfortune was for the most part a punishment, an expiation of ancient faults not entirely cancelled."

Line 11:

cf. "Thunder winged with red lightning"

- Milton.

IV. SECURING THE HELP OF THE LADY-LOVE'S CONFIDANTE

1. Enlisting the Confidant's Help

The hero speaks:

It isn't easy henceforth to have union
With her, the liana-like, whose lips are like *kovvai;*
I languish like them that think not
Of the Dancer whose red hair is bathed
By the light of the beauteous crescent.
My sorrow by her bright spear-like eyes begot
I'll communicate to her of perfumed locks
Sought by bees. (50)

Line 7:

Her of perfumed locks : The confidante of the Lady-love. The penulitimate line literally runs thus: "She of flowery locks by bees besought."

The kovvai in line 2, is a creeper whose ruddy fruit is lovely to behold.

2. Deciding to Convey His Grief

The hero speaks:

Her hip is a liana and her eyes are blue lilies;
Her side-long looks do tell me
That the one beside her, a slender creeper,
Is indeed her very life.
I languish in sorrow like those who are
Devoid of the grace of the Lord of *Chitrambalam*
Who shares in His frame His incomparable Consort.
My plight I'll to her now convey. (51)

Lines 2-4:

The eyes of the heroine indicate to the hero in a casual manner, her confidante without her knowing it.

3. Did a Tusker Pass this Way?

The hero speaks:

He holds the Fire in the palm of His hand
And dances in bliss;
I am with His devotees companied in joy
And I adore Him in proud elation;
He is the Lord of *Tillai;* in this, His mountain,
Did an elephant endowed with a pair of tusks
And triple ichor sought by the buzzing bees,
Pass this way in delight great? (52)

The hero has to coin an excuse for his presence. The tusker comes in handy, in the context.

cf. பதவா ரணத்தர சூரொப்பிலாமுலை பாகர் வெற்பில்
இதவா ரணவும் இணைமுலையீர் தெவ்வர்க் கிடழிந்து
சிதவா ரணமொன்று கையான் புனத்திடைச்
சேறலைப்போன்
மதவா ரணமொன்று வந்ததுண்டோ உங்கள் வான்
புனத்தே.

-திருவாவடுதுறைக் கோவை, 84.

4. Did a Stag Pass this Way?

The hero speaks:

He couldn't be eyed by *Kannan*, the dark-eyed;
In His garden imbrowned with noon-tide bowers
You seem to grow like tender lianas
Sought by the bees bathed in honey.
  Did a stag wounded by arrows
  -- Sharp as your eyes---, pass this way? (53)

See notes for stanza 52.

cf. பன்னவ் வியாவெழு தோற்றத்து நின்ற பரனடியார்
தன்னவ் வியந்தவிர் குற்றால நாதர் சயில மின்னே!
முன்னவ் வியொன்று செலக்கணை தைத்த முளையுங்
கொண்டு
பின்னவ் வியோர்கலை சென்றதுண் டோநும் பெரும்
புனத்தே.

-குற்றாலக் கோவை, 83.

5. Which Way Leads to Your Town?

The hero speaks:

He shares in His form the Lady
Whose pretty pink feet beautify the anklets.
He gifted me to His devotees true
To render humble service unto them;
Serpents are, in sooth, His ornaments
And He abides at *Ambalam*.
To your little town in *Kailas*, bejewelled by
Ranges of hills cloud-capped,
What may the way be? Pray tell me. (54)

See notes for stanza 52.

cf. பெரு வானவர்புகழ் கோடீச்சுரேசர் பிறங்கன் மின்னே
கருவாய் வனத்தைக் கடந்து எளியேனுட் களிப்பினொடு
மருவாய் பொழில்சூழ் சிவபுரங் கூடு வழியுனது
திருவாய் மலர்ந்திங் கிதுதான் என ஒன்று செப்புகவே.

-கோடீச்சுரக் கோவை, 7·9.

6. What Indeed is Your Town?

The hero speaks:

The Lord of *Chitrambalam* held an arrow unique
To destroy the fortressed cities three;
He peeled off the hide of the tusker
Of triple ichor and hanging mouth.
You, who are like beauteous creepers
In the thickly wooded grove of *Kailas*,
Be pleased to come unto me and tell me
Of your town, if you are sure
That it'll not involve the dwellers here in blame. (55)

---

cf. ஏதூர்த் தமிய னறியேன் செலும்வழி, யாதுநும்மூர்
மாதூர மோவணித்தோ புகல் வீர்; நிதிமன்னளகை
மூதூ ரெனுமெங்கள் நல்லூரரான் சங்கரமூர்த்தி வெற்பில்
காதூருங் கள்ளங் கலந்தூர் தருந்தடங் கண்ணியரே.

-சங்கரமூர்த்திக் கோவை, 70.

7. What May Your Names Be?

The hero speaks:

He wears on the crown of His matted hair
The crescent unique.
He is *Ambalavan* whose throat is dark as nimbus;
You 'll not ope your lips to disclose unto me
Your town in His *Kailas*.
You need not, if you deem disclosure a blame;
But oh you damsels of fragrant locks,
Pray tell me your names. (56)

Line 2:

This crescent is unique as it neither waxes nor wanes.

8. The Hero Speaks, Their Silence Notwithstanding

The hero speaks:

He, our Dancer is the Lord of (nine) *rasas;*
These women in this region are like unto
His ornate *Tillai* which confers boons (on his devotees);
They are perhaps bound by a vow of silence
When new-comers are present; if it isn't so,
Their ruby lips will let fall pearls with liquid sound
If they but ope them. (57)

Line 1:

Rasas : Bharati says: "All life is rasa. Our ancient writers reduce all forms of experience -- emotional, intellectual or spiritual --, into nine Rasas -- Love, Mirth, Compassion, Heroism, Wrath, Fear, Repugnance, Wonder and Peace. But they say that all these are one, au fond....."

The first line according to Perasiriyar should be rendered thus: "He our Lord is a Dancer, sweet to behold".

Line 6:

Let fall pearls:

cf. (i) *"வாய் திறக்கில் உகுமோ மணி நித்திலம்"*

-அம்பிகாபதிக்கோவை, 84.

(ii) *"வாய்முத்தும் சிந்திவிடுமோ நெல்வேலி வடிவம்மையே"*

– தனிப்பாடல்

Line 6:

Liquid sound : The Tamil original is the onomatopoeic word "salak."

9. Declaring His Intention

The hero speaks:

You are like His *Ambalam* the Lord of which
Shares in His beauteous form His Consort
Whose forehead bright is like a bow,
And whose eyes are spear-like.
O ye bangled damsels wrought of beauty
With bright fulgurant waist
And teeth so white!
Behold these leaves like ruby red!
Do you deem them fit to cover your golden forelap?
(If so, be pleased to wear them). (58)

Lines 1-2:

The Lord .... Consort : Ammai-Appar. The Father concorporate with the Mother.

cf. (i) "பாங்கன் அகலத்து இறைவி"

-தக்கயாகப் பரணி, 292.

(ii) "தடமார்பு நீங்காத் தையலாள்"

-சுந்தரர் 5-6

(iii) "பேதை தடமார்ப திடமாக உறைகின்ற பெருமான்"

-சம்பந்தர், 3-70-4.

10. Further Questioning

The hero speaks:

The Lord of *Chitrambalam*, of yore, smote
  Lanka's King
To fall beneath His mountain.
In His fecund beauteous *Kailas*
You sport, with eyes like arrows
That are below the bows of eye-brows.
   Your swelling hips beneath the girdle
   Will have to stay supportless.
   Chains of pearls, row on row,
   Hang beneath your beauteous breasts;
   What may your slender waist be? (59)

Line 4:

Eyes : Looks.

cf. "Alack! there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords."

- Romeo and Juliet.

V. THE CONFIDANTE'S PUZZLEMENT AT THE HERO'S VISIT

1. The Confidante Doubts

The confidante speaks:

He lacks lustre like those who do not sing Him
Who smote the teeth of the Sun-god;
He questions about tusker and deer;
He holds no bow but only *Naka* leaves;
Yet is he on a hunting spree;
Not a word of truth has he uttered;
O what a liar!
He is reluctant to quit this mountain-field;
Who may he be? (60)

Thus thinks the confidante. She appears to be a great psychoanalyst.

Line 4:

Naka : Also known as Surapunnai. Gamboge, Ochrocarpus longifolius.

The Tamil word ஏனம் (boar) appears to be an erroneous transcription. According to Dr. U.V.Swaminatha Iyer ஏணம் (deer) should be the word.

2. Plumbing the Depths of His Mind

The confidante speaks:

In this mountain-field of *Ambalavan*
Whose look did once,
The God of Love, to cinders reduce,
He first spoke about a tusker,
Then a stag, then on things divers;
Again on soft leaves, and by stages
He wound up ultimately on the waist of her,
The soft-eyed one innocent.
Great indeed is the depth of his words. (61)

---

cf. "Love that makes breath poor and speech unable."

- King Lear.

VI. CONNING THAT WHICH HAPPENED

1. The Confidante Questions the Heroine On Her Sadness

The confidante speaks:

He dances (for ever) in *Chitrambalam;*
He with a unique eye in His forehead;
She dives and sports in the pool fed by water
Flowing from the crest of *Kailas* where He abides,
And tunes her shrill calls echoed by the hills.
Is it because of such exacting sports, my soft one
A tender liana —. looks wilted? (62)

Line 5:

Shrill calls : They are like unto the song-bursts of nightingales.

VII. DIVINING

1. The Hero Offers to do their Bidding

The hero speaks:

Shall I for you row a boat on the sea?
Shall I for you catch the leaping wealth of tide?
Shall I fetch you a heap of pearls in a single plunge?
Shall I in *Tillai*'s forum of the Supreme
Vend bangles wrought of conch and shell?
Shall I run errands for your elder brothers?
Shall I weave garlands cool,
Moist with honey, for your curly locks?
O ye ornate, command me. (63)

The hero speaks like King Feroz to Queen Gulnar:
"Let thy mouth speak and my life be spent
To clear the sky of thy discontent."

- Sarojini Naidu.

2. Divining His Intention

The confidante speaks:

When she who is like *Siva's Tillai* but moves
A trifle away to chase the parrots from the fields
Or when bees try to settle on her luxuriant hair
Or even when she does nothing, his bright face
  reacts
Like a crystal which shows not its hue
But reflects the colour of the object nearby;
She is the cause for such metamorphoses;
His mind but works with an ulterior motive. (64)

Line 2:

The parrots are a menace to the crops.

Line 3:

Tamil poetic tradition has it that a woman decks her tresses with honey-laden flowers.

Lines 5-6:

Saiva siddhanta says that the soul is like that to which it is attached. It is likened to a crystal which, except when the sun is at its meridian, reflects but the hue of objects nearby. Till the advent of "iru-vinai-oppu" when the Aanava mala of soul becomes ripe for a spiritual surgery, the soul is in environmental shackles. Therefore it is, St.Umapati says:

"The crystal pillar receiving sunlight
Glows; but casteth no shadow of its own;
Be thou so in God's light, of darkness rid."

- The Tiruvarutpayan, 67.

3. Divining Her Intention

The confidante speaks:

The ancient One that dances in the *Ambalam*
Saves one from the melbowge of embodiment.
If one, unspoilt, adores Him steadfast in love.
My lady with the look of the deer in His hand,
Casts two kinds of glances simultaneously
-- One of innocence and the other of deceit
When I tell her: "Here he comes with leaves"
Her heart leaps with joy. (65)

Lines 4-5:

Perasiriyar says that though the heroine's eyes resemble those of Siva's deer, no guile or deception can be attributed to the divine deer.

Line 8:

In the original, she is described as one with a beauteous forehead.

4. Inferring that the Intention of Both is Identical

The confidante speaks:

His heart is not truly set on hunting;
Her watch over the millet-fields is but a ruse.
She is like unto *Puliyur*;
Her lily-eyes painted with collyrium are but bees;
They seek their red lotus -- his face;
We know not aught else.
They plunge deep, suck honey and are made
beauteous. (66)

Line 3:

Puliyur : The old name for Chidambaram (Tillai).

Line 6:

The beloved has a way of achieving her object. She can behold her lover without looking at him.

Line 7:

They : The bees (her eyes).

VIII. DESIRING TO BEHOLD HER BASHFULNESS

1. Bidding Her Adore the Crescent

The confidante speaks:

My lady of long dark eyes tinct with collyrium!
I seek not the false celestials even forgetfully;
For ever I seek His golden-ankleted feet
That I may gain the bliss of release.
    To the small crescent white, of beauteous rays,
    On the heavens incarnadine, very like the one
    On the matted hair of bright *Tillai's* Lord,
    Pay obeisance; fold thy roseate hands. (67)

Adore the crescent:

The confidante has by now come to know that her friend has secured for her a lover (husband). Once a woman becomes a wife, she adores none but her husband. To get confirmed in her finding, the confidante indulges in a trick. She bids her friend adore the crescent. If she refuses to adore it, it can be inferred that she is now the wife (beloved) of the hero.

2. Addressing Her as if She were Someone Else

The confidante speaks:

He of the *Ambalam* wears on his neck
Goodly beads of *rudraksha;* in His *Potiyil* range
A damsel keeps watch over the green cool fields;
She is the tender sprig of the lord of this hill;
She fared forth to bathe in the mountain stream;
Your limbs and lineaments are very like hers;
O celestial damozel, she indeed is your compeer. (68)

Line 2:

Rudraksha beads are the nuts produced by eloeocarpus ganitrus.

The heroine has not disclosed to her confidante anything about her love. She is therefore aggrieved by the conduct of the heroine. The confidante suggests that the heroine has now suffered a sea-change. She tells the heroine, with a touch of naivete, that though she resembles her friend, she is not her friend.

3. Jesting on Her Supposed Bath in the Pool

The confidante speaks:

You are like the Lord of *Tillai Ambalam*
White with holy ashes smeared over ruddy body;
The kum-kum on the breasts of your fair frame
Hath faded clean away;
You wear a wreath on your long dark tresses
Where pollen is found spilled;
Your whole frame is surcharged with passion
And you sparkle with a new complexion fair;
If I can come by these, I too will sure
Seek that great spring for a bath. (69)

To come by even stronger proof of the love that subsists between her friend and the hero, the confidante suggests to her a bath in the spa. Not willing to let the occasion slip, the heroine moves away and is met by her lover in that part of wooded slope "where the leaves speak continuously in sibilants together." They have their fill of dalliance. The heroine returns, her limbs and garments bearing eloquent testimony to her just-now-enjoyed union. This gives the coveted opportunity to the confidante to tease her friend.

4. Speaking of Union

The confidante speaks:

From the eye in the forehead of the Lord of *Ambalam*
Emitted fire, and to ashes, reduced him
Who wielded sweet death from his Bow of Sugarcane.
In His mountain huge, can that spring
Where you bathed, cause dark eyes to redden
And red lips turn white? Can it eke invest
One with a pleasing wreath of flowers,
Honey-laden and attracting bees? (70)

See notes for stanza 69.

Line 3:

Sweet death : The pain caused by Love.

5. The Confidante's Discovery of Cor Unum

The confidante speaks:

He hasTHATwhich can manifest as all things;
He is the Lord of *Ambalam* surrounded by gardens;
In His mountain, my lady and her lover,
Share alike their pain and joy
Like a single pupil that serves
The corbie's eyes twain.
A single life animates both their bodies. (71)

Line 1:

THAT : Sakti

Adiyarkku Nallar quotes this stanza in his explication of a line (141, Adaikkalak-kathai) in Silappadikaram.

Lines 3-4:

This concept is again referred to by our poet. Vide st.307

The reader can also usefully refer to st.1017 of Jivaka Chintamani.

The concept of the crow having two eyes but only a single pupil is referred to in the commentary on Sutra 114, Kalaviyal, Tolkappiyam.

IX. TEST BY FRIGHT

The confidante speaks:

His feet unknown to the Two, alas,
Are by the Three-Thousand adored at *Tillai Ambalam.*
A tiger, cruel like them that hail Him not,
Oped its fierce mouth, to devour a noble, alas!
In the nick of time,
He wielded his spear
Decked with a tintinnabulum
And the beast but escaped by the skin of
its teeth. (72)

The two : Brahma the Creator and Vishnu the Sustainer.

The three Thousand : The three thousand highpriests of Tillai.

தீவாய் உழுவை கிழித்தது: This can be interpreted in three ways:

1. The tiger opened its fierce mouth.

2. Something or someone tore the fierce mouth of the tiger.

3. The cruel mouth of the tiger tore someone.

This imaginary episode is narrated by the confidante with a view to assess the reaction of the heroine.

X. RESORT TO THE PALM-HORSE

1. Expressing Inability to Endure any Further

The hero speaks:

He deemed even me worthy and rules me abiding in
me;
The light that is dark unto *Indra*, *Vishnu* and *Brahma*
Floods divine *Chitrambalam*; you are like unto it.
O ye of dark locks, white teeth and red lips,
Tudi-like is your waist.
If you grant me not your grace benign
My life will sure wilt and waste away. (73)

Resort to the Palm-Horse:

In his Preface to The Maxims of Tiruvalluvar, V.V.S. Aiyar says:

"..... But lovers in the Tamil land had perfected in the course of ages an ingenious machinery to stead them under a dilemma of this kind. The lover undergoes a sort of martyrdom both physical and moral in order to induce the people of the village and the parents of his lady-love to pity his distraction and offer him of their own accord the object of his passion. A few branches of the palmyra

tree are joined together so as to enable a man to sit astride on *the bundle,* the lover sits on it, and a number of his friends carry him in that posture into the village, singing passionate songs of love. The edges of the palmyra bránches being rough and hard, the "riding of the palmyra stalk" or the "palmyra horse", as it is called, is a veritable penance. The young folks of the village mock at the love-lorn pilgrim and perhaps refer to the object of his passion by name even. The outcry reaches the ears of the parents and other relations of the maiden in the village. They reproach *her for entering into* matrimony without their consent, but there is no remedy now but to give their consent, and everything ends happily for the lovers. *The idea of the "palmyra horse" may be* compared with the following verses of the Twelfth Night, I.V:-

Make me a willow cabin at your gate,
And call upon my soul within the house
With loyal cantons of contemned love,
And sing them loud even in the dead of night,
Holla *your name to the reverberate hills,*
And make the babbling gossip of the air
Cry out Olivia!

2. Declaring the Way of the Love-Lorn

The hero speaks:

When damsels cast nets with their eyes
Which dazzle like death-dealing javelins,
They that lose their hearts, like fish in nets,
Wear holy ashes and wreaths of madar
Of the Lord of *Puliyur* vast, in the south,
Hold aloft pictures of their beloved ones
And ride through their hamlets
On horses wrought of palmyra stems
As if they were fiery galloping steeds. (74)

Natrinai 152, Kalitthokai 139, 8-10 and Tiruvarur Nanmanimalai 24, 12-4, also refer to the wearing of madar (calotropis gigantea) wreaths by the love-lorn riding palm-horses.

3. Declaration of His Determination

The hero speaks:

Even when heaven and earth and mountains too
Are total lost in the great deluge at *yuga's* end,
The merciful One abides; He is the Lord-
of *Ambalam*
Whose vestment is a lion's hide.
I am like them that aren't by His grace blessed;
A woman, in form a slender creeper
Hath made me ride a palm-horse, alas! (75)

Line 4:

cf. (i) *"மாயத்து ஒரு தூண் வயிற்றிற் பிறந்த*
நரசியத்துரி போர்த்த செவ்வி"

- கழுக்குன்றத்துலா, 41.

(ii) *"ஒழித்த சிங்கவுரி புயத்தின் உத்தரிய மாகவே"*

-திருவண்ணாமலைப்புராணம், திருவவதாரம், 6.

4. Describing the Riding

The hero speaks:

I, the heart-broken, will paint myself
And also your joyous peafowl of the rainy season;
The painting on the cloth shall be truly picturesque.
I'll hold aloft the picture and ride the palm-horse
Through your street in the little town
On the melliferous slope of *Kailas*
The feet of whose Lord -- the Deity of *Ambalam* --,
Have, this day, done away with my birth. (76)

Most Rev.Dr.R.Arulappa in his work, God The Bridegroom (a Kalaviyal Commentary on Tirukkural Inbattuppal) says: "It is a way of saying emphatically that that those who want to achieve true love, must be prepared for any kind of insulting comments from others."

5. Prevention by an Appeal to His Grace

The confidante speaks:

We adore Him, the Dancer, the Ancient One;
Neither *Brahma* the four-faced, nor *Vishnu* could
Behold *Siva's* form, His crown or feet.
In His fecund *Tillai* flourishes the beauteous palmyra
Where nestle the pretty cock and hen with eggs and
all.
Should we destroy it to make of it a horse?
O Prince, whither then can sweet grace
find a home? (77)

---

cf. *"மண்ணை வளர்க்கும் கழுக்குன்றின் மேவும் வரதருயர்*
விண்ணை யளிப்பவர்க் கன்பிலர் போல விகங்கமொடு
கண்ணை முகிழ்ப்பில் சிறுபார்ப்பு முட்டையுங் கட்டழித்துப்
பெண்ணை யழிப்பது மன்னா கருணையின் பெற்றியன்றே."

-கழுக்குன்றக் கோவை, 117.

6. Dissuasion Pointing Out the Impossibility of Painting Her Ankle or Gait

The confidante speaks:

Neither metrical *Vedas* nor *Vishnu* could
Behold His feet; these He revealed unto me
And made of them beauteous flowers bright for
  my crown;
She is like unto the Ancient One's *Puliyur*
Her voice has mastered the notes of the bright
  yazh;
The gait of this virgin is swan-like.
Can your picture-gallery boast
Of paintings such as these? (78)

Lines 2-3:

cf. (i) *"அழலோம்பும் அப்பூதி குஞ்சிப்பூவாய் நின்ற சேவடியாய்"*

-அப்பர், 4-12-10.

(ii) *"தில்லையோன் அடிப்போது சென்னித் திகழுமவர்"*

-திருக்கோவையார், 181.

(iii) *"தில்லை கூத்தன தாள் முடிக்கு அலராக்கும் மொய் பூந்துறைவன்"*

-திருக்கோவையார், 291.

Line 5:

Yazh : The Indian lute (harp).

7. Dissuasion by Pointing Out the Impossibility of Painting Her Limbs

The confidante speaks:

He of *Puliyur* set at nought my sevenfold birth
Cancelling entries relating to me, in *Yama's* ledgers.
If you, in His *Puliyur*, can paint the *yazh*,
Melodious like her words,
The beauteous pearls serene, like her teeth,
The wreath of soft flowers
That decks her tresses of darkness,
And the *Kovvai* fruit, her lips,
And if these can also be painted on the form of
a liana
Whose eyes are like tender mangoes split into two,
Then, with that picture, you can to our town
Fare forth to ride your palm-horse. (79)

Lines 1-2:

cf. "..................................அவன்
கால் பட்டழிந்தது இங்கு என்தலை மேலயன்
கையெழுத்தே"

-கந்தர் அலங்காரம், 40.

Contrast : The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.

- The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, 51.

Lines 3-10:

cf. "ஆதரித்து அமுதில் கோல் தோய்த்து அவயவம்
அமைக்கும் தன்மை
யாதெனத் திகைக்கு மல்லால், மதனற்கும் எழுத வொண்ணா"

-கம்பன்.

8. Prevention By Dissent

The confidante speaks:

You may ride the horse wrought of palmyra, tall
and strong;
Perhaps you may not, oh you of heroic anklet!!
We aren't here to administer a corrective unto you.
Yet, if I but divulge your desire to her,
-- The one of darksome locks that flourishes
At my Lord's *Tillai* --,
And move her by words of suasion to consent,
She may her assent signify; who can predict?
Thereafter you may do what pleases you most. (80)

The riding of the palm-horse involves a martyrdom as V.V.S. Aiyar observes. And martyrdom according to Kahlil Gibran, "is the voluntary falling of the supreme soul to the level of the fallen one." The confidante desires to avert this calamity.

சீர்வாய் சிலம்பு is translated by the old commentator as "the lord of beauteous mountain."

9. Prevention by Assent

The confidante speaks:

He has a hooded serpent for his waist-cord;
Poison churned out of roaring sea and darker than *kohl*
Decks his throat as nectar and living sapphire.
If I were to get drowned in the great and ancient sea,
She the gold of *Puliyur* would be the first
To court death by drowning even before me;
Now a days, such, for me, is the love
Of the one of dark tresses laden with honied
  blooms. (*81*)

The idea is that the confidante would court martyrdom even before the hero seeks it. She would rather die than see the hero ride the palm-horse.

XI. THE HEROINE INFORMED OF HERO'S PLIGHT

1. Gauging Heroine's Intention

The confidante speaks:

Oh woman, a youth very like the son of our Lord of *Tillai*
Where pretty-winged bees suck sweet honey
From the pollen-laden blooms worn on locks
And sing 'Tey, Tey'
Doth with a sharp spear frequent our fields
Not ostensibly on any purpose; he is also taciturn.
My bejewelled beauty of flower-decked locks
Pray, tell me what may be meet for us to do? (82)

Line 4:

And sing 'Tey, Tey':

cf.(i) *"வரிவண்டு தேதெனை என்றிசை பாடும்"*

-பெரிய திருமொழி 4, 1:1.

(ii) *"யாழினிசை வண்டினங்கள் ஆளம் வைக்கும்"*

-பெரியாழ்வார் திருமொழி 4, 8:6.

(iii) "எல்வியம்போது இரும் சிறை வண்டு எம்பெருமான் குணம் பாடி"

-பெரியாழ்வார் திருமொழி 2, 1:2.

(iv) "வண்டு குறிஞ்சி மருள் இசைபாடும்"

-பெரிய திருமொழி 2, 1:2.

(v) "காந்தாரம் அம்தேன் இசைபாட"

-பெரிய திருமொழி 3, 8:1.

2. A Speech of Soft Words

The confidante speaks:

My fair one of large eyes with thin red streaks!
Behold him who is bewildered!
His frame is like tender leaves aflame;
He holds in his hands moist leaves, fresh and green;
He would not from these mellaginous fields part;
Neither would he utter a word; I know not
If he is the son of *Puliyur's* Lord of matted hair
Or the God of Love who wields flowers as arrows.
What may this marvel be? (83)

Line 3:

cf. "Love is a trembling happiness."
- Kahlil Gibran.

3. A Minced Narration

The confidante speaks:

O bejewelled one, he that is like unto the son
Of the Lord of *Ambalam*, beheld a male crab
Feed his pretty mate with a *jambolan*, in size a beetle,
And he, the noble one, stood undone,
As though possessed.
Had you but witnessed this
You would not have survived the sight. (84)

Lines 2-3:

cf. (i) *"சீர்ப்பெடையோடு அலவன் பயில்வது கண்டு"*

-திருக்கோவையார், 155.

(ii) *"பலவின் … … … வாழையின் பழனும் புள்ளிவாழ்*
அலவன் ஞெண்டினுக்கு உய்த்து…."

-சீவகசிந்தாமணி, 2109.

(iii) *"அகலிலை நாவல் உண்டுறை உதிர்த்த*
கனிகவின் சிதைய வாங்கிக் கொண்டு தன்
தாழை வேரளை வீழ்துணைக் கிடூஉம்
அலவற் காட்டி நற்பாற் றிதுவென
நினைந்த நெஞ்சமொடு நெடிது பெயர்ந்தோனே."

-புறநானூறு, 380.

4. Pretending Ignorance

The heroine speaks:

My bejewelled, the main -- ancient and great --,
Where skims many a ship, is like *Tillai's* supernal Lord.

The Sea

That we may get pearls from conch and chunk
The sea enters the backwaters;
It flows with the flood of Ganga;
It is full of noisy barges floating on its billows.

The Lord

That we may get the pearl of *Mukti*
Which is at-one-ment with His hallowed feet
He that is beyond Space in which abide all things,
Even He -- the formless, hath a form assumed;
He sports the river Ganga on His wavy hair;
He holds a skull round which kites do wing
In uproarious dinsome rounds. (85)

Mukti : Release, the Bliss of Release.

It is difficult to render this poem in English with the double entendre of the original, intact. A paraphrase alone has been attempted.

The Lady-Love's reply appears to be vague. It is vague, no doubt, but this is studied vagueness. A close scrutiny of her words will reveal her hidden mind.

The hero was described to her as the son of Siva. Even he had come seeking her. To what might this be likened? To the descent of the Lord-God Himself, who in the context is compared to the sea. The great sea, she says, is a lover of backwaters.

5. Conveying the Message by Deceptive (Misleading) Words

The Lady-Love speaks:

To seek the feet of Him who destroyed the three for-
tresses
Vishnu (as a boar) bored the earth and when stymied
Surfaced up and prayed thus: "Oh my Father, grant
me grace."
He that endowed me with twin hands to adore His
feet twain,
Thereupon relented a little and showed him one
of His feet.
(Thus blessed) he continues to beseech Him at
Tillai's court
For the boon of revelation of the other foot also. (86)

When Siva appeared as a column of fire, Vishnu took the form of a boar and began to delve the earth to behold His feet. Brahma took the form of a swan and flew up to behold His crown. Neither of either was successful.

The suggestion in this poem is to the effect that the gods proceeded contrary to nature. The swan should seek the lotus (Siva's feet) and the boar the forest (Siva's forest of matted hair). Viewed in this light, the illogicality of the ventures is seen to be plain as a pikestaff.

The relevancy of the above episode is to be guessed by the reader. The hero had already come by Pankarkoottam (meeting the heroine through his confidant). Having gained that, he now seeks the boon of union, with the help of the confidante. This is like unto praying for a vision of the other foot.

6. Speaking Displeased

The confidante speaks:

You may ponder over that which requires consideration,
Discuss it all threadbare with your bosom-friends
And at leisure arrive at your sly solution.
Or you may not seek any solution, for what I know.
Like them that have not seen even once *Tillai*,
The Lord of which blesses not hypocrites,
My words -- those of an ignoramus --,
Merit not your acceptance; forget them.
This alone is my request. (87)

Line 7:

Forget them : That is, forget my words. To her insistent queries the confidante receives no direct answer from the heroine. She has no stomach for the heroine's charades and conundrums. She seeks a straight answer. If the heroine is unwilling to oblige her, the confidante is willing to get non-enticized.

7. Exhortation by Harsh Words

The confidante speaks:

His body is smeared with the holy ash of *Tillai's*
  Lord
Who wears a dress of goodly hide;
His hand holds aloft a pictured canvas
And the report goes that it bears your form.
O you peafowl of pretty plumes,
What may, it be that hath this evil wrought?
Not a word does he utter, the sinner, alas!
He seems bent upon riding the palm-horse huge. (88)

The sole aim of the confidante is the preventing of the hero's riding the palm-horse. To achieve this she would coax, cajole or even castigate the heroine.

8. Addressing Her Mind

The Lady-Love speaks:

I sorrow like them that hail not *Puliyur*
The Lord of which has thick matted hair like ruddy gold.
I cannot con the malady that afflicts me;
Yet will I not let fall words from my lips.
Oh my mentor-mind!
No sin should beset me, as is bruited.
If you can truly convey the deep grief caused to me
By my inability even to hear of his pain,
You'll do well to report it to the dear merciful one. (89)

Line 6:

bruit : to noise abroad.

The Lady-Love feels that even her confidante is unable to understand her. She feels forlorn. In such a plight she can only depend upon her own (heart) mind. Tiruvalluvar says that one is truly helpless when one's heart refuses to help one out of one's distress.

"துன்பத்திற்கு யாரே துணையாவார் தாமுடைய
நெஞ்சம் துணையல் வழி"

XII. REMAINING AWAY

1. A Proffered Gift of Tender Leaves

The hero speaks:

You are like unto *Tillai* the Lord of which, shares
In His frame His Consort of soft mellifluous words.
You accept not these leaves, beauteous blooms and
buds;
You but willingly heap cruelties on me
That I should pine and wail all alone.
Did you but learn to look daggers at me?
Are the looks of your flowery eyes the arrows of
Manmath? (90)

To the lover burning in love, his unobliging beloved is but an accomplice of the God of Love who is out to tease him in a myriad ways.

Lines 6-7:

cf. "Her speech is ruddy nectar sweet
and 'neath her coiling ringlets black
Her brow shines like the crescent moon
beneath the lowering low cloud-wrack;

There Cupid lays aside his bow,
 that fatal foe to human hearts
There whets his flowery darts."

– Nala Venpa, Tr. Maurice Langton.

2. Leaves of Sandal May Cause Scandal

The confidante speaks:

The Lord of *Ambalam* dances holding fire;
Dangling serpents are His garlands;
Whoso loves Him, He causes their love to increase
multifold
And He doth for ever abide in them. If you, sir,
Present us with leaves of sandal from His *Potika*
Hill
And if she be seen wearing them above her forelap
It will give rise to this suspicious question:
"Who brought these leaves to her?" (91)

The offer of leaves which can be woven into a garment, by the hero to the heroine, appears to be the relic of a tribal custom. "Mundu Kodutthal" (Presentation of garment) is still rife in Kerala.

தழை (tazhai) is a garment woven of green leaves and fragrant flowers. This is a waist-band.

3.These Leaves Too Belong Not Here

The confidante speaks:

The Lord of beauteous *Ambalam* in the remote
past
Smote all the skyey lords that attended *Daksha's*
sacrifice
And also laid waste the pits of triple fire; if you sir,
Present us with leaves that grow not in His hill,
We the dwellers of this hill, who hail
From blame-free houses, will stand stigmatised. (92)

Line 2:

Daksha's sacrifice : Daksha the father-in-law of Lord Siva performed a great sacrifice. He had little respect for the Lord. He courted Siva's wrath, and his sacrifice ended in blood-shed and massacre.

Line 3:

Triple fire : These are known as "Aagavaniyam", "Dakshinagni" and "Garukapatyam".

4. Can't Accept Before Knowing Her Mind

The confidante speaks:

The Lord shares Her whose speech is
Musical as *Yazh*.
He indeed is the seven billowy oceans
And also the seven worlds.
Her eyes are like the antelope's; her lips are
Ruddy as *Kovvai;* her locks are dense and curly.
She is like unto His *Tillai*. O lord of hill,
If she bids me receive them
I will come eftsoon to receive them. (93)

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cf. The Tiru-k-kovaiyar, Stanza 79.

5. Rejection on a False Pretext

The confidante speaks:

He is the effulgence of fire; He indeed is
The beauteous flame that dances in *Ambalam;*
He shares in His frame the flute-throated Lady.
Like me, she too, the tender *Vanchi*,-liana, would be
Pleased with these leaves; but aye, there's the rub.
These leaves are to be had
Only from the comely *Asoka* - grove
On the vast slope of His *Kutralam*. (94)

Line 4:

Vanchi : This is a creeper. There is also a species of tree which goes by this name. Vanchi is also the name of a town, the capital of the Cera Kings. Stanzas 22, 32, 94 and 344 of the Tirukkovaiyar contain references to Vanchi.

6. Rejection on the Ground of Her Bashfulness

The confidante speaks:

The Lord of *Chitrambalam* has an eye in His forehead
Which reduced to cinders the puissant one
Whose superior arrows of flowers are laden with honey.
In His hill we build toy-houses of clay, and play.
If we essay to deck her hair with a fragrant wreath
(Over the one put on her crown by her foster-mother)
The girl whose forehead is bright, will feel bashful.
In this our hill, even young female baboons feel
abashed
When they wear tiny wreaths of *naka* blooms. (95)

Line 2:

The puissant one : God of Love.

The confidante tells the hero that the heroine is by nature hyper-bashful. Indeed even the female baboons of that hill feel abashed when they wear wreaths of naka (surapunnai) blooms. A fortiori the heroine will feel abashed when she learns that she is to be decked with flowers gathered by you.

Line 9:

Naka : Alexandrian Laurel. Naka flowers look like stars. The tree has a massive trunk.

7. Rejection on the Ground of Impropriety

The confidante speaks:

Chief of cloud-capped hill,
In your hill, tuskers ply their way to rocks
Damasked with honey-laden *venkai* flowers,
And deeming them to be ferocious tigers
They are anon stuck with terror.
In this huge mountain of *Ambalam's* Lord
Accoutred in the striped hide of panther,
Will ever we -- the hill-dwellers --, weave into
Our wreath of *venkai* flowers laden with pollen
Other blooms sacred to gods? (96)

Line 3:

Venkai : The Kino tree, Pterocarpus bilobus. The stripes of the venkai flowers are likened to the tiger's *stripes.*

Lines 4-5:

cf. (i) *"கருங்கால் வேங்கை வீயுகு துறுகல்*
இரும்புலிக் குருளையில் தோன்றும்."

-குறுந்தொகை, 47.

(ii) *"கருங் காலின வேங்கை கான்ற பூக் கன்மே*
விருங் கால் வயவேங்கை யேய்க்கும்"

-திணைமாலை நூற்றைம்பது, 26.

8. Refusal on the Ground of Inopportunity

The confidante speaks:

As she has not come out to gambol, swans are
Unable to learn and emulate her gentle gait;
Pretty fawns cannot practise the looks of her flower-
  eyes;
Parakeets cannot hearken to her words and imitate
  them.
She, the flowery liana who is like *Puliyur*
-- The Lord of which is decked with serpents
Which glister bright and dwell not in ant-hills --,
Is unaware of the goings-on here. (97)

Lines 1-2 :

Compare the words of the Swan that spoke to Prince Nala about Damayanti, thus:

"Her loyal Maids-in-waiting we
  Our Lady serve with deep devotion
And there from our preceptress learn
  the art of undulating motion"

- Nala Venpa.

9. Refusal on the Ground of Severe Surveillance

The confidante speaks:

My mother will rebuke me, if I tarry any longer;
My brothers are a very tough and cruel lot;
This place too will soon be deserted;
Sir, your hill is far away.
The king of lights is atop Mount *Meru*
Which was once bent, to destroy His foes,
Into a strong bow by the Lord of *Ambalam* who sports
On His flowing matted hair the cool crescent. (98)

Line 5:

The King of lights : Sun.

10. You had Better Tell Her Yourself

The confidante speaks:

Our Supreme Lord is the God of *Ambalam* which is
Beauteous as the russet evening sky.
O chief of hill! in His auric mountain range,
Behold the monkey herd! There a male monkey
Dips in honey drupels of jackfruit and feeds
His mate therewith; thus does he tend her with care.
It is therefore but meet that you should yourself
Go to that long-haired beauty and tell her
These sweet words that'll surely thaw her heart. (99)

Lines 4-6:

cf. (i) *"பலவின் இருஞ்சுளைகளும் கீறி நாளும் முசுக்கிளை
யொடுஉண்டு உகளும் கேதாரமே"*

-திருஞானசம்பந்தர், 2-114:6.

(ii) *"மந்தி கடுவனுக்கு உண்பழம் நாடி மலைப்புறம் முந்தி"*

-சுந்தரர், 43-8.

(iii) *"மந்தியின் வாய்க் கொடுத்து ஓம்புஞ் சிலம்பு"*

-திருக்கோவையார், 257.

(iv) *"உலை வந்து அயரும் சூல் மந்திக்கு உருகா,
நிலம் கீண்டு, உதவு குலக்
கலை வன்பலவின் சுளை கீறி, களிப்போடும்
அளிக்கும்"*

-வில்லிப்புத்தூரார் பாரதம்.

Line 9:

These sweet words : delicious as drupels soaked in honey.

11. Refusal on the Ground of Incompatibility of Families

The confidante speaks:

You hail from a fecund and cool region
Where ripe coconuts fall down on pollen-covered glebe
Smashing areca branches and banana trees as they fall.
My lady of honied speech hails from *Paramkunram*
Of *Ambalam*'s Lord who is concorporate with *Uma*.
Hers is but a little hamlet where hill-like tuskers
Shudder, as lions go a-hunting. (100)

Lines 2-3:

cf. (i) *"தாழை இளநீர் முதியகாய் கமுகின் வீழ நிரை*
தாறு சிதறி வாழையுதிர் வீழ்கனிகள்"

-திருஞானசம்பந்தர், 3, 71:1.

(ii) *"வாழைமுழுமுதல் துமியத் தாழை இளநீர்*
விழுக்குலை உதிரத் தாக்கி"

-திருமுருகாற்றுப்படை .

(iii) *"காய்மாண்ட தெங்கின் பழம்வீழக் கமுகினெற்றிப்*
பூமாண்ட தீந்தேன் றொடை கீறி வருக்கை போழ்ந்து
தேமாங்கனி சிதறி வாழைப்பழங்கள் சிந்து...."

-சீவகசிந்தாமணி, 31,

Line 5:

Uma : Siva's Consort

Line 6:

Hers : The heroine's.

12. Raillery Accompanied by Refusal

The confidante speaks:

The Lord of *Chitrambalam* shares in His form
His Consort whose forehead bright is like a bow;
In His *Kailas*, the arrows darting from the bows
Of our elders pierce through hill-like tuskers
And furrow the earth.
But here, it was but a stag hunted by him
That ran away with the arrow stuck into it.
Great indeed is the puissance of his bow
Bent by him in murderous hunt. (101)

Lines 3-5:

cf. "மலையுருவி மரமுருவி மண்ணுருவிற்
றொரு வாளி"

-கம்பன்.

13. Pitying Accompanied by Refusal

The confidante speaks:

Like devotees true who quiver in ever-increasing love
Before the hallowed feet of the Lord of *Ambalam*
Whose throat displays a dense azure,
He that is with a palmful of tender leaves,
  is atremble
He queries about the tusker
Though his hand holds no bow.
The great one blabbers as one demented;
What cruel evil is this! (102)

Lines 1 and 2 describe what Rudolf Otto calls "mysterium tremendum et fascinans."

14. Refusing as it will be Unbeseeming

The confidante speaks:

The Dancer ruby-like is adorned with bones and serpents;
She of the dazzling form is like unto His *Chitrambalam*,
Unable to match the brilliance of her beauteous body
O Chief of the cloud-capped hill,
In our hill, never once would mango trees
Put forth tender leaves, soft and cool;
Neither would lilies bud and bloom in ponds. (103)

Line 7:

The word 'Sunai' means spring; derivatively 'ponds' fed by its water.

15. Refusing as She is too Young to be Wooed

The confidante speaks:

In the hearts of devotees who melt in love
And in *Ambalam*, He alike abides as spiralling lustre.
The locks, fragrant with honey-laden flowers
Of our child of His *Tirupperunturai*
Aren't long enough to be wound in a knot;
Her breasts are yet to sprout; she is but a child
Whose sweet lisping is mere sound and not speech.
Sir, what is it that you desire to tell her? (104)

The words in lines 1 and 2 of the original viz.,

உருகுதலைச் சென்ற வுள்ளத்தும் அம்பலத்தும் ஒளியே
பெருகுதலைச் சென்று நின்றோன் பெருந்துறைப்பிள்ளை

refer indubitably to our saint Manickavachakar. In Tiruvidaimaruthur Mummani-k-kovai, Pattinatthu Adikal refers to him as திருந்திய அன்பிற் பெருந்துறைப் பிள்ளை.

Line 7:

Kulalai : எழுத்து வடிவம் பெறாத சொல்: unformed word.

Mazhalai : Lisped words.

16. Laughing at His Inability to Conceal His Intent

The confidante speaks:

As a babe he once slumbered on banyan-leaf;
(As a god) he burrowed through earth
To behold His feet, in vain;
So in sheer devotion he essays now
To behold His bright ankleted feet.
 You are the lord of the flowery ford
 Of hoary *Tillai* where bees swarm thick
 Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings.
 Just reflect; if you choose to conceal
 Your intent from me, it'll seldom meet with
  fruition. (105)

17. Rejoicing at the Smile

The hero speaks:

He has an eye non-pareil on His forehead;
Like gushing nectar ineffable
He abides in my mind as my Saviour;
O you grand-shouldered girl like unto *Tillai*
Endowed with a double row of orient pearls
That doth veil a silver smile
Is not your soft and sly look that beams
From your visage, my aid of aids? (106)

Lines 7-8:

cf. "And as the bright sun glorifies the sky
So is her face illumin'd with her eyes."

Venus and Adonis, 481-482.

18. Enquiring as if She Knows not His Intent

The confidante speaks:

The one flew beyond the heavens,
The other bored to the roots of earth,
He indeed is beyond the vision of these great Two;
He is the Lord of *Ambalam*.
In His pollen-covered garden of sandal trees
At *Kazhukkunru*,
Innumerable beauties sport with balls.
Who 'mongst them is blessed with your grace? (107)

Line 3:

Two : Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu.

19. The Hero's Description of the Limbs of His Beloved

The hero speaks:

Her rotund breasts are like *kurumpai;*
Her hair is of the hue of *Konrai* seed;
Her lips rubuicund are like *kovvai* fruit;
Behind them are teeth,
Pearl-white wedges, all transparent at the edges;
Her flowery eyes are purple lilies; her visage bright
Glows like the full moon with all its digits.
She is like *Chitrambalam* girt with groves
Whose Lord indeed is the remover of fettering
deeds. (108)

Line 1:

Kurumpai : Small, very tender coconut.

Line 2:

Konrai : Cassia.

தவவினை தீர்ப்பவன் : This may also mean: "He who frees His devotees from severe austerities (and graces them)."

20. Speaking of Her Eyes Admiringly

The hero speaks:

Those large eyes of my beloved
Expansive grow like my love of *Siva*,
Are dark like *pasa* removed by Him,
Are bright like *Tillai's* lustre,
Are white like the holy ashes smeared on His shoulders
And are long like our beauteous words
With which we hail His flower-like feet. (109)

Line 3:

Pasa : The bond; the threefold impurity which fetters the soul. Literally, the word means: 'a rope'.

21. Gift of Leaves Accepted

The confidante speaks:

As you have subdued the invincible tusker
And languish persisting in love,
In spite of our protests,
Is there aught, oh lord of hill
That we, who hail from an ancient family,
Cannot render unto you?
Sir, in the Hill of Him, the Lord of *Ambalam*
Whose feet are not to be eyed even by
Vishnu,
These tender leaves alone are acceptable to us
As you have gathered them for her
Who is 'honey' not to be found in hives. (110)

Line 10:

'honey' : According to Perasiriyar, this honey is untouched by hand.

cf. "As chaste as the unsunned snow"

- Cymbeline.

22. Divining the Heroine's Intent

The confidante speaks:

When I beheld tender leaves in his hands
Who is like a tusker that resents a goading hook,
I formerly coined words of falsehood, to dodge them.
When I behold the deer in the hand of *Ambalam's* Lord
I am reminded of your soft looks;
My dear, huge are your breasts coveted by jewels!
As this day I sense sorrow in the looks of that prince
I have not the heart, in yarns to indulge. (111)

The message of the confidante is as follows:

"I have kept him for long at bay. He is steadfast in love. I can coin, no longer, any excuse. He has been tried and tested. Accept him."

23. Suasively Speaking After Divining the Intention

The confidante speaks:

Your locks are sought by bees, oh fair one of pure words!
The Great One's shoulders are smeared with white holy ash.
To the Lady who shares His frame,
The Lord of *Tillai* is both father and son.
Did he not save us from the phytophagous tusker
That was very like the one whose hide He peeled, of yore?
Can we suffer the beauteous leaves held in his hands to fade? (112)

Lines 3-4:

In Tiruvachakam, it is writ:

"இமவான் மகட்குத் தன்னுடைக் கேள்வன்
மகன், தகப்பன், தமையன்".

So, Siva is Her Husband, Son and Sire and Brother too. How? The answer *takes us to the core of* Saiva Siddhanta. To create the world, the Lord becomes Siva and Sakti. He is therefore Her Husband. From Sakti tattva, Sadasiva tattva is born. He is therefore Her Son. Sakti tattva takes birth from Siva tattva. He is therefore Her Father. It is from Suddha-Maya both Siva and Sakti tattvas are born. So, He is Her Brother too.

cf. (i) ***கனகமார் கவின்செய் மன்றில்***
அநக நாடகற்கு எம் அன்னை
மனைவி, தாய், தந்தை மகள்

— சிதம்பரச் செய்யுட் கோவை, 33.

(ii) ***அரனுக்குத் தாயும் மகளும் நல் தாரமுமாமே.***

-திருமந்திரம், 1178.

(iii) சிவஞ் சத்தி தன்னை ஈன்றும் சத்திதான்
சிவத்தை ஈன்றும்

-சிவஞானசித்தியார்.

(iv) மலைமகள் தன்னுடைய பாலனை

-அப்பர், 4, 88:1.

(v) மனோன்மணியைப் பெற்ற தாயிலான்

-அப்பர், 5, 91:1.

24. Speaking with Compulsive Reasons

The confidante speaks:

Oh bejewelled, if leaves be accepted
We'll be blame-ridden;
If they be not accepted,
He will sure ride the palm-horse.
Our Lord dwells at *Ambalam*
And His Flag sports *Rishaba*.
In *Siva's Eankoy* Hill, a tusker invaded our fields,
Laid them waste and moved like a hill to kill us.
Did he not quell it? How is that to be
requited? (113)

Line 6:

Rishaba : The divine bull that Siva rides; an incarnation of dharma (piety). Rishaba in couchant posture is in the shape of the Tamil letter 'ந'. St. Appar therefore describes the Lord's banner as ந - shaped (நகர வெல் கொடி).

25. Urging to Accept the Leaves

The confidante speaks:

With His 'bow of Hill' all incandescent
He burnt His foes;
He is the One who hath enslaved me;
He is in form a ruddy hill, the Lord of *Chitrambalam*.
These fadeless leaves, no doubt, were with ease
Brought here by him, the chief of hill;
Remember, these are to be had only from fecund
Kailas;
His gift attests his grace; may you accept it.
I have spoken the truth. (114)

Line 3 :

enslaved me : enslaved even me whose heart was stony.

cf. கல்லை மென்கனி ஆக்கும் விச்சை கொண்டுநின்
கழற்கு அன்பன் ஆக்கினாய்

-திருவாசகம்.

26. Conveying the Glad Acceptance of the Leaves

The confidante speaks:

Pasam that fettered me, He clean broke, and rules
  me;
O hero great, the leaves you gave her, grow
Only in the realm of the Lord of *Tillai Ambalam.*
  I carried them and gave them unto her;
  Should I narrate to you, what the slim-waisted
  Did with the beauteous leaves, it'll grow voluminous.
  Short of grinding them fine, into pulp
  And pasting her whole frame withal,
  There was nothing she did not do with them. (115)

Lines 4-5 :

The confidante would not waste words, as she is obviously aware of the truth of the dictum which says: "There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd."

Lines 6-8 :

Woman in love grows mad at the sight of things blessed with the touch of the lover. When Pisanio told Imogen that before his departure, Posthumus waved and kissed his handkerchief, she burst out thus:

"Senseless linen, happier therein than I." Presuming Antony to be on horseback Cleopatra said: "O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!" Andal the Nachiar raved thus:

"பெண்ணின் வருத்தமறியாத பெருமான அரையில் பீதக
வண்ண ஆடை கொண்டு, என்னை வாட்டந் தணிய
  வீசிரே."

XIII. TRYST BY DAY

1. Announcing the Trysting Place

The confidante speaks:

There is a grove, all dark and unpierced by
The rays of the sun; in its midst blow
Star-like *naka*-blooms where bees lie cradled;
It is rich in glowing crystal rocks;
Forsaking its heavenly abode
The moon abides here and reveals its beauty;
He is the ethereal light, the Lord of *Ambalam*;
As this is His hill, the sun shies at it
And will not dare enter it; (come thither). (116)

Lines 5-6:

cf. ". . . . the face of brightest Heaven had changed
To grateful twilight (for night comes not there
in darker veil) . . ."

— Milton.

Line 7 :

The Light

cf. (i) "அண்டம் ஆர் இருள் ஊடு கடந்து உம்பர்
உண்டு போலும் ஓர் ஒண் சுடர்"

-அப்பர்

(ii) ".. the saving light infinite
Glows as the immeasurable Beyond."

- Potrippahrodai, Tr. T.N.R.

2. Trystward-Ho!

The confidante speaks:

He rids us of the fear of embodiment;
The Lord of *Tiruvambalam* shares in His frame
  His Consort;
In his hill cool is the field where we will
Play and swing in the cloud-piercing swing.
This done, we'll move to the hill nearby
And there, as it were, receive the cascade.
O gold, your eyes bright are a pair of carps,
O *Lakshmi*-like, come, thither shall we go. (117)

Line 4 :

A hyperbolic description.

Line 6 :

"It has been well said that purity -- which in the best analysis is physical cleanness -- is the final result of evolution after which Nature is ever striving..... To the Romans the rites of the bath formed one of the very chief occupations of life, and to this race it has happened, as probably to no other ancient race, that their baths have often survived their temples..."

- Havelock Ellis.

The Tiruvempavai, the Tirukkovai and the Tiruppavai elevate bathing to a spiritual rite.

3. To the Trysting Place

The confidante speaks:

That the accumulated *karma* of them that adore Him
Pat on their waking at dawn, be reduced to powder
The Lord of *Ambalam* is adorned with the holy
  ash;
O growing twig, well-adorned ! in His mountain,
Let us guard the wealth of fields, the millet,
Shout aloud in the reverberating hills,
Build small play-houses, plunge in the water
  of spa,
Gather matching flowers and watch the peacock
The nature of which is like unto yours. (118)

Lines 1-3 :

This is an instance of the healthy mother taking medicament to cure the ailing child she suckles.

cf. (i) பாலுண்குழவி பசுங்குடர் பொறாதென
நோயுண் மருந்து தாயுண்டாங்கு

-சிதம்பர மும்மணிக் கோவை, 1, 14:15.

(ii) இளங் குழவிப்பிணிக்கு ஈன்றதாய் மருந்து நுகர்வது
போல்

-திருவானைக்காப் புராணம்.

4. Leaving, After Taking Her to the Trysting Place

The confidante speaks:

You are like unto the Supreme One's *Tillai*;
I'll go yonder and pluck for you, big blooms
Laden with pollen and honey and humming bees,
To weave them into your plaited hair;
The creaking bamboos there, put to shame by your arms,
Wind-swayed, brush each other and break at joints
And scatter their goodly pearls on the rocks, which will
Sure hurt the soles of your feet, soft as fleece.
(You can't go with me, tarry here.) (119)

Bamboo is compared to a woman's arms. The points of comparison are (1) freshness (2) softness and (3) shape.

5. Praising Rapturously

The hero speaks:

Your breasts are adorned with rows of chains;
Oh innocent one, you have come to abide here
In this immense garden
Of cool *Kailas* the Lord of which
Is the One who presides over *Tillai.*
  Did you deem this hill *Vishnu's* bed which is
  The serpent with a thousand hoods?
  Did you deem me the lotus-eyed *Vishnu* tall?
  Did you deem the lotus of my heart your seat? (120)

Vishnu's bed : Adisesha.

Line 8 :

cf. *நீயோ திருமகள் நின்னைமுன்னாள்வர நேர்ந்து பெற்ற*
தாயோ அமுதம் தரும் திருப்பாற் கடல் கார்க்கடல் போல்
தீயோ டழல்விழிச் சேக்கையின் மேற்றிருக் கண்வளர்ந்த
மாயோன் என நினைநதோ எனனை வாழ்விக்க
வந்ததுவே.

- அம்பிகாபதிக் கோவை, 154.

6. Getting Near

The hero speaks:

Like the very grace of the Ancient One of *Tillai*
Girt with gardens were flowers bloom in bunches,
She stands before me and with her soft *Kantal* hands
Covers her lily-eyes whence roll down pearls;
She conceals herself behind a liana
As if to compare her beauty with its;
O ye immense breasts of my Lady-Love,
How is it that you should swell any more?
Will you tax the waist that sustains you? (121)

Line 4:

Pearls : Tears of rapture

cf. *தாமரை தண்மதி சேர்ந்தது மணிபோலக்*
காமர் செங்கையிற் கண்ணீர் மாற்றி

- *மணிமேகலை, 3, 12-13.*

Line 6 :

cf. *நலங்கொள் மைந்தனை தழுவின னென்ப தென்னளிநீர்*
நிலங்கடாங்குறு நிலையினை நிலையிட நினைத்தான்
விலங்கன்ன திண்டோளையு மெய்த்திரு விருக்கும்
அலங்கன் மார்பையுதனது தோண்மார்பு
கொண்டளந்தான்.

- *கம்பராமாயணம், அயோ. மந். 60.*

7. Informing Her About Confidante's Knowledge

The hero speaks:

You are like unto the sea of *Tillai* whose Lord hath
Steeped me in such delight as to make others tell
  me thus:
"You are a bibber of draughts of vintage cool."
Pollen-dust strewn by me over your locks sought
  by bees,
Jewels with which I have bedecked you,
Comely wreath wherewith I've wound your bright
  curly locks,
O damsel of beauteous forehead, are all very like
Your friend's handiwork who is like you;
Get not perturbed, but be at ease. (122)

Lines 1-3 :

cf. (i) *சென்னியின் மத்தம் உன்மத்தமே*
இன்றெனைக் காணவாறு.

- *திருவாசகம், 17:10.*

(ii) *மருளார் மனத்தோர் உன்மத்தன் வருமால்*
என்றிங் கெனைக் கண்டார்
வெருளா வண்ணம

- *திருவாசகம், 32;3.*

(iii) *எனை மத்தோன் மத்தனாக்கி*

- *திருவாசகம், 34:3.*

(iv) *பித்தெனை ஏற்றும்*

- *திருவாசகம், 47:6.*

8. Speaking Rejoiced

The hero speaks:

She is a red lily surcharged with honey,
Aye, the red lily bud that blooms a little,
Inly glad that it is very like the beauteous feet
Of the Lord of *Chitrambalam* who wears
The rich and moist crescent as a wreath;
  I am of that gracious race of bees
  That attach themselves to the red lilies,
  Drink their rich nectar
  And are from them inseparable. (123)

Line 1 :

Even as the red lily is surcharged with dew the heroine is full of joy.

Line 2 :

The red lily bud begins to bloom:

This is an indicant that the girl-child is now entering the threshold of nubile girlhood.

Lines 6-9 :

Tradition has it that there are classes of bees which are very discriminate in their selection of flowers for extracting nectar. Natrinai (st. 1) speaks of bees which draw nectar from lotus flowers and build hives on sandal trees that grow on a hill-top.

தாமரைத் தண்தாது ஊதி மீமிசைச்
சாந்தின் தொடுத்த தீந்தேன்

are the words in the original. Pinnatthur Narayanaswamy Iyer says that the bees spoken to here, draw nectar from lotuses and sandal blooms (alone).

9. Sending Her to Her Friendly Bevy

The hero speaks:

You are like unto *Chitrambalam* the Lord of which
Hath saved me clean from the enmeshing cycle
Of birth and death and rules me as his devotees true.
With buds as lovely stars, green leaves as nimbi,
-- Verily, a full moon --,
Rises the white lotus unfolding its beauty,
From the tank like unto the skyey expanse,
Over the fecund pollen-covered garden where
sport
Your mates, a bevy of beauties;
Go there to brighten it. (124)

Note: Anacoluthia is no grammatical vice in Tamil or Sanskrit literature. Ideas may drift about to an extent though they do not drift away.

Line : 9

The heroine is the moon among her mates who are the stars. According to Tamil literary tradition the stars, in the absence of the moon, lack their natural lustre.

cf. *நாண்மீன் வாய்சூழ்ந்த மதிபோன் மிடைமிசைப்*
பேணி நிறுத்தாரணி

-கலித்தொகை, 104, 27-28.

In his commentary on the above lines, Nacchinarkkiniyar says that the playmates of the heroine and the heroine are likened to the stars and the moon.

10. The Confidante Joins the Heroine

The confidante speaks:

You are like unto a gentle fawn;
Why should you wilt like them that are
Bereft of the grace of the Lord of *Tillai*
Who is like gold and bright as lightning
And whose matted hair sports angry serpents?
Pain not your soft fingers
By plucking buds; for your perfumed locks luxuriant
I have gathered these fitting flowers fragrant. (125)

Under the pretext of securing flowers for the heroine, the confidante is to move away, contact the hero and send him to the heroine. The confidante is one who is happy in the happiness of her friend. This is indeed macarism.

11. Entering the Scene of Sport

The confidante speaks:

Bright is your forehead, and you are like *Puliyur*
Whose Lord with His beauteous feet -- inaccessible
to others --,
Graces my crown; I have profusely decked your
fivefold plaits
Sought by bees, with these pretty bunches
Thick-set with fragrant flowers.
O fair peafowl, when the soft wind blows
Tread slowly that your waist may not grieve
To company with your old friendly throng. (126)

ஐம்பால் : "The five modes of dressing a woman's hair; the hair of a female."

— Winslow.

"Women's coiffure took five different forms, such as wearing the hair in a bun, or knotted on one side, or in a single plait, or in a number of plaits, or in long curls."

— N.Raghunathan, Six Long Poems from Sangam Tamil.

12. Entreating the Hero in Privacy

The confidante speaks:

O Great one, this indeed is our little town
Where roars the cataract.
Tarry here this day and partake
Of honey and tubers -- our victuals.
May you also witness this night, the *Kuravai* dance
Of the rumbustical hill-dwellers;
Then on the morrow, may you leave
For the ornate city of *Tillai* in the south
The Lord of which is for ever a *Mukta*,
A grantor of blissful release to fettered souls,
The One that is Supreme, the Dancer in Flame. (127)

Line 5 :

Kuravai : A rural dance.

Line 9:

Mukta (Mutthan) : According to Saiva Siddhanta, Pati the Lord, is beginninglessly free from mala (the fettering blemishes). He is for ever free.

cf. *முத்தராவார் மகாதேவர்*

-தக்கயாகப்பரணி உரை, (610).

Line 10:

The dancer in Flame :

At the end of the yuga, a conflagration devours the universe. Siva enacts a dance in this Flame in 'fine frenzy'.

13. Preventing His Coming by Referring to Her Nubility

The confidante speaks:

Lord of hill, whence flows honey torrential
Rolling rubies, uprooting sandal trees, severing tusks
From fearless tuskers and flooding all directions!
Huge indeed are her beauteous breasts,
And they swelling grieve the liana-waist of her
Who is like unto the Lord's *Puliyur*
Whose great mount -- the Bull,
Resembles His immense Silver Hill.
(Cease trysting; seek marriage). (128)

The hyperbole of lines 1 to 3, is needed to convey the intended esoteric message.

Line 4:

Great Bull : This has also reference to Vishnu who serves Him as His carrier.

cf. "The day He burnt with fire the triple mighty walls
Vishnu divine a bull became and carried Him ..."

- The Tiruvachakam.

Line 5 :

Silver Hill : Mount Kailas.

Line 8:

The unwritten suggestion of the original is given here in translation. Tamil tradition permitted union before marriage. "Union first, marriage next" appeared to be ruling motto of the Tamils. As this resulted in abuse, the process was reversed later. The Tolkappiyam says:

"பொய்யும் வழுவும் தோன்றிய பின்னர்
ஐயர் யாத்தனர் கரணம் என்ப." - The Tolkappiyam.

14. Praising Her Without Consenting for Marriage

The heroine speaks:

He turns them into worms who think not gratefully
on Him;
He has put an end to my cycle of birth and death.
Even in the golden city, in form a storeyed mansion
Thrives not a damozel like unto her who is
The child of *Brahma* throned on lotus-pedestal.
Do you deem her a mere arboured liana
Of the arcade on the slopes of *Kailas*? (129)

Lines 1-2:

"He is good to the devout, and not good
Unto the undevout; likes or dislikes
He has none, for Sankara is His name."

-The Tiruvarutpayan, Tr. T.N.R.

Line 3:

The golden city : Celestial Amaravati, ruled by Kubera, a friend of Siva.

(கூடம்) Koodam : May also mean a divine shrine wrought of timber.

15. Urging Him to Marry by Disclosing the Truth About Their Life

The confidante speaks:

Chief of hill, the slopes of which are dight
With dark and green gardens, where white pearls
Lie scattered from bamboos, and thus resemble
The far-off heavens!
Our parents who are blessed by the Lord
With love solely for His ruddy feet
Are the denizens of the hill
Of the Lord of *Ambalam* who rules me.
We guard the millet in this hillscape. (130)

Line 7:

The hill-dwellers are a hospitable but a ferocious tribe.

Line 8:

We guard the millet in the field and suffer no trespass.

16. Urging Him to Marry to Avert Grief

The confidante speaks:

She who is like *Lakshmi* will surely wilt
If you do not wed her;
Your complexion loses lustre
If you think of wedding.
I lament like the brainless who do not
Hail the golden, ankleted feet
Of the Lord of *Chitrambalam*,
The Supreme Light beyonding all;
His glory is for ever by the celestials meditated. (131)

Line 7:

cf. "He's the One of Space righteous that sustains
The inner Space of space; He is the Light
That lights the light by true Grace begotten."

—The Nenju Vidu Thoothu, Tr. T.N.R.

17. Urging Him to Wed Her as it is Feared that Her Mother May Arrange Her Marriage with Someone Else

The confidante speaks:

The Lord of *Ambalam* wears as it were
A digit of the moist moon on His spreading matted
  hair.
The feet of our Lord, oh chief of the hill in *Kailas*
  range,
Are hailed, by *Vishnu* who alone remained
When he had devoured the entire universe.
Beholding her *Kovvai* lips and bright swelling breasts
Our mother is besieged by care, and thinks thus:
"We are yet to see a support for this
  slender-waist." (132)

Line 8:

In olden days, a mother's anxiety centred round her unmarried daughter. It would wax great with the advent of her daughter's nubility.

cf. *பெண்ணின் மனக்கவலை பெற்றோர் மனக்கவலை*
மண்ணுலகில் எல்லார்க்கும் மாறாநிலையன்றோ!

– M.L.Jhangappa, Anthai-p-pattu.

18. Urging Him to Marry Her as She May be Confined to the House

The confidante speaks:

The Lord of *Ambalam* caused fire to gambol
And burn the cities three;
When bees buzz about, our elder brothers will know
That combs in hives are filled with honey;
They'll then set to work making ladders of bamboos
Which sway in the hill, of which you are the lord.
Mother cast keen looks on the soft one and forbade her
From sporting in His divine hill. (133)

Line 2:

His every act is a sport : Saiva Siddhanta has it that the acts of the Lord are so many sports. They constitute His play. This does not mean, He is playful. His act is loaded with meaning and purpose. Yet He performs it so effortlessly that one should deem it a mere play.

cf. ஐங்கலப் பாரம் சுமத்தல் சாத்தனுக்கு விளையாட்டுப்போல

-சிவஞான முனிவர்.

Line 5:

cf. நிலைபெய்திட்ட மால்பு நெறியாக

-மலைபடுகடாம், 316.

19. Urging Him to Wed Her, as Her Kin May Confine Her to Her House

The confidante speaks

Beholding her waist grieve like them that know not
Of His ancient glory notwithstanding their learning,
As they did not hail the Lord of *Chitrambalam*
Whose matted hair is kept bound, O chief of hill,
Her relations will surely confine her in her house,
Even her who is like nectar churned out billowy main.
Besides, the little town will indulge in much small
talk. (134)

Line 5:

cf. "இல் இகவாப் பருவம்"

-பெரியபுராணம்.

20. Urging Him to Wed Her by Affirming that His Proposal will be Accepted

The confidante speaks:

Matrimony is indeed the proper way; mother'll be glad
Of it like me; father too will abide by your words;
The kin are already on your side;
Why should I articulate many a word?
The celestials throng to hail the Dancer of *Ambalam*,
May you wed the grand-shouldered beauty
In the august presence of the dwellers of His *Kutralam*. (135)

Lines 5-7:

cf. (i) குற்றாலத்து அமர்ந்துறையுங் கூத்தா

-திருவாசகம்.

(ii) குற்றாலத்து எம் கூத்தா

-திருவாசகம்.

(iii) குற்றாலத்துறை கூத்தன்

-அப்பர் தேவாரம்.

The dwellers of Kutralam are the devotees of Siva. The wedding that takes place in their presence is the spiritual union of the soul with God.

21. Urging Him to Marry Her Before Someone Else Subdues the Bull and Claims Her

The confidante speaks:

Our elder brothers who are neat-herds
Have honed the full-grown horns of the bull
-- Which in shape is like the one which the Lord
Of *Puliyur* wide in the earth, doth ride --
In our town fenced by *mullai* creepers,
Beholding the spear-sharp, black-eyed
Beauty's buxom breasts bright, the weight
Of which enfeebles her slender waist. (136)

The custom rife among the cowherds was to select a bull-calf that was born on the day when a girl-babe was born, rear it in all glory, sharpen its horns when the girl has become nubile and unleash the ferocious beast to roam at will. He who subdues it can claim the girl as his bride.

22. Urging him to Wed Her as Other Proposals are Afoot

The confidante speaks:

He flayed the skin of a hill-like tusker
Whose trunk was huge as a palmyra tree;
He set ablaze the mighty cities;
He, the Lord of *Ambalam*, is the Alpha.
  She's like His *Tiruppanayur* hailed by celestials.
  Other proposals for marriage are afoot;
  O chief of hill, what am I -- the blame-worthy --,
  To tell you? (137)

Line 6:

The original reads thus:

"Someone is coming on the morrow
To deck her with gold."

Dr. M.Shanmugam Pillai opines that Pon-punaital is "perhaps the proto-form of tali-investiture."

23. Urging him to Marry Her as Millet is Ripe for Harvest

The confidante speaks:

He abides in *Ambalam* concorporate with His consort;
In His *Kailas* range in the north, *Venkai* trees
Rich with their golden flowers, seem to say:
"Gather ye the millet in the fields."
They shower and scatter their gold, the flowers,
And abundant honey oozes out.
Like an astrologer, they have set the time
And thus have ended the trysts, o speaker of pure
words. (138)

This poem contains a pun. Men who are mean offer whatever they have, to hirelings to achieve their nefarious end. Venkai trees like the base, offer honey and gold to harvesters whose intrusion will put an end to the trysts of lovers.

24. Urging Him to Wed Her as Tryst by Day is no Longer Possible

From the *Potiyil* hill of the Lord of *Tillai*
Circled by fertile fields beauteous,
Innumerable bees and rows of joyous beetles
In quest of fragrance, come winging to pierce
The buds and blooms and scatter them away.
To our detriment, *Venkai* tree -- the great sooth-sayer,
Has set the time for harvest; what am I to say?
Our kith and kin are ready to come with scythe and sickle.
O great one, our watch over the fields, is ended. (139)

அலர் தூற்ற : This phrase contains a pun. It also means "spreading rumour (scandal)." When a girl suffers from calumny, her kith and kin will take their scythe and sickle to cut and quarter the fellow who had wronged her.

25. Urging Him to Wed Her as their Watch Over the Now Despicable Millet-field is Over

The confidante speaks:

He who is enshrined in *Ambalam* abode in my heart,
Made me think of Him and caused His glory to be
  sung by me.
Impelled by the love for the mountaineer of His *Potiyil*
We sowed millet seeds and guarded the crops
  in joy.
Alas, it looks as though we didn't sow millet seeds;
They have by and by grown to be but evil deeds.
Behold this, we must needs eat the fruit thereof. (140)

Line 2:

cf. (i) *"அடியை அடைந்து உள்ளம் தேறி"*

-நம்மாழ்வார்.

(ii) *"தீர்ந்த அடியார் தம்மைத்திருத்திப் பணிகொள்ள வல்ல"*

-நம்மாழ்வார்.

(iii) *"தானேயான் என்பான் ஆகி*
தன்னைத் தானே துதித்து"

-நம்மாழ்வார்.

(iv) *"என்சொல்லால் யான் சொன்ன இன்கவி என்பித்து*
தன்சொல்லால் தான்தன்னை கீர்த்தித்த மாயன்"

-நம்மாழ்வார்.

26. Urging Him to Wed Her as the Venkai Is Now to be Despised

The confidante speaks:

He ate the venom wrought by the roaring ocean;
He abides at *Ambalam*, as nectar unto beholders;
He indeed wiped out all our *Karma*.
You are like a peacock of the sky-piercing *Kailas!*
Had we but nipped all the buds at the budding time
Could this wonderful *Kani* have ventured
To have the millet harvested to harm us thus? (141)

The confidante addresses the venkai tree; but the message is intended for the hero. In her state of anxiety and confusion, she is not all-too-nice about grammar. Here is a jumbling of grammatical persons. The tree is addressed in second person as well as third person. This is a case of "starting in iambs and ending in spondees." The situation gains no clarity with the introduction of the word கணி (kani) a double entendre. It refers to (1) a venkai tree as well as (2) a person of the astrologer clan.

27. Urging Him to Wed Her, Pitying His Plight

The confidante speaks:

Our hill-folks sow and reap when they should
And miss not the seasons;
The long and dense millet crops reared by us
In this hoary field will stay, if only the *karma*
Of our throng of devotees who reach *Tillai*
To adore the lofty and extensive feet of the Lord
Of *Chitrambalam* can stay. (142)

Karma constitutes both deeds and the results thereof. Saiva Siddhanta has it that every deed carries with it, its consequence which will have to be undergone, willy-nilly, by the doer. It is only Siva (Guru) who can nullify Karmic resultants.

The deed is likened to the seed, its consequences to the crops.

cf. (i) அஞ்செழுத் தெங்குரு நாதன் றனதடி யார்க்கொழித்த
சஞ்சிதம் போலத் தினைமுற்று மாள

-திருவாவடுதுறைக் கோவை, 179.

(ii) புண்ணியர்தம் தீவினையற்றது போலற்ற வாவித் தினைப்
புனமே.

-கலைசைக்கோவை, 173.

28. Marry Her; Harvest is Over

The confidante speaks:

He is our Refuge who desires our Refuge in Him;
He is the Supreme Ens; He holds the fire
That burnt the cities which flew in the sky;
He is the Lord of the ever-during *Ambalam.*
  Like the annulment of the desire for embodiment
  Unto the race o His devotees,
  The watched-over field now lies
  Denuded of its crops.
O Chief of hill, we have nothing more to say. (143)

Line 5:

cf. *அவாஎன்ப எல்லா உயிர்க்குமெஞ் ஞான்றும்*
தவாஅப் பிறப்பீனும் வித்து.

-குறள், 361.

29. Urging Him to Wed Her as Parting is Ever Painful

The confidante speaks:

The Lord of *Ambalam* rules us in compassion.
Wild paddy crops in the low fields fed by mountain rills
From His *Tirupparankunru*, had been harvested.
Still, this day, the young parakeets settle
On the stubbles in the fields,
As if to remind us that parting from even devils
Having once cultivated their friendship
Is well-nigh impossible. (144)

ஐவணம் : Oryza mutica; mountain paddy (wild rice).

Lines 5-7:

cf. (i) *பேய்வயினும் அரிதாகும் பிரிவு*

-திருக்கோவையார், 343.

(ii) *பேயோடேனும் பிரிவொன் றின்னா தென்பர்*
பிறர் எல்லாம்.

-சுந்தரர், 95:9.

30. Entreating Peacock to Urge Marriage

The confidante speaks:

The wish of *Kaniyar* this day stands fulfilled;
Adieu, oh dark fields, gardens rich in gems!
You'll forget us, (for you are friends of *venkai*).
O ye peacocks from ornate *Kailas*
The Lord of which abides in *Ambalam!*
If you chance to behold him that comes alone
With a sharp spear, pray, tell him thus:
"They have done that which loving ones dare
not do." (145)

Line 1:

Kaniyar : Venkai trees; astrologers.

Line 8:

Parting is one act in which lovers dread to indulge.

cf. If you will say, 'I leave thee not;' then tell
me so;
Of quick return tell those that can survive this
woe.

- The Kural, 1151, Tr. G.U.Pope.

31. Sorrowing at the Desolate Field

The hero speaks:

I stood at the cross-roads, not knowing the true path;
He, my Ruler, cured me of my bewilderment.
If this be the hill of *Siva*, the Lord of *Puliyur*,
How is it that it looks so forlorn this day?
O my garden grand, what has become of you, this day?
What is it that ails you? Nor is this all!
Behold this field immense, which was
Like unto the roaring cascade of honey
That this day hath turned into bitter gall. (146)

Lines 1-2:

cf. (i) பொதுவற அடிமை செய்திடு வழியடியார்

-குமருகுருபரர்.

(ii) பொதுநீக்கித் தனைநினைய வல்லோர்க்கு
என்றும் பெருந்துணையை

-அப்பர் 6, 1:5.

32. Grieving at the Inaccessibility of Her Town Though Nearby

The hero speaks:

He who is an ocean of bliss, dances at *Chitrambalam;*
This is the little acropolis that nestles on His great hill
Whence flows a honey-stream by leaps and bounds.where
The golden one who is like unto His *Ambalam*, abides.
Though this is so near, I can do nothing.
Like the child that cries for the moon that skims
the sky,
I pine for her and so do you too, oh my goodly
heart. (147)

Line 6:

cf. (i) *விசும்புற்ற திங்கட்கு அழும் மழப் போன்று*

-திருக்கோவையார், 198.

(ii) *நாண்மதியை வருகென்று மகவொன் றழைத்த*

-சீகாழிப் புராணம்.

(iii) *பனிக்கதிர் அ(ள்)ள கரக்கரை வான்நீட்டு மைந்தர்*

-கந்தர் அந்தாதி, 10

XIV. TRYST BY NIGHT

1. Entreating Tryst By Night

The hero speaks:

He is the remedy for the grievous malady of birth;
He abides at *Ambalam* as nectar true.
White-bangled beauty,
Rills gush forth uproarious from His hill
The top of which is beautified by clouds that rest there.
Your little town is girt with a wood reared by you
It pierces the sky and is in darkness steeped.
This evening I come to your town as a guest. (148)

Line 1:

cf. (i) பிறவிப் பிணிக்கோர் மருந்தே

-திருவாசகம், 27-9.

(ii) மருந்தவன்

-திருஞானசம்பந்தர், 1, 110:1.

2. Forbidding the Tryst by Pointing Out the Perils of the Path

The confidante speaks:

Sir, the pathway to our town is small and narrow
Like an ascent through a ladder to heavens;
Again, the rain it rains incessantly;
So it will be like entering a narrow cavern dark
Which is treacherously damp and dark in places;
Even Mind will shudder and shrink
From making the slippery climb.
Such is the way to our town in the mountain
of the Lord
Of beauteous *Ambalam* who wears a cool
crescent. (149)

The righteous way leading to God is but small and narrow. The ascent is by a brittle rope-ladder swaying in the sky. Tempests and storms rock to and fro the dangling ladder, which grows tapering, and foot-hold which grows smaller and smaller and slippery to boot, evades the shaky foot. Mind, phenomenally puissant, quakes and trembles. It has to be cast away. However the Lord stands by the true devotee at his hour of darkness and composes him with the divine light and serene calmness, symbolised by His cool crescent.

3. The Breaking of the Hero's Heart

The hero speaks:

He is indeed honey wild;
He made obdurate *Yama* yell as He slew him;
He is the Dancer of *Tillai* cool;
Like the cripple languishing for the honey
Hived on the peak of the Lord's mountain wild,
Oh heart, you grieve sore; unendurable is the pain
I suffer for your love of the rare damsel. (150)

Lines 4-5:

cf., (i) நெடுவரை பெருந்தேன் கண்ட இருக்கை முடவன்

-குறுந்தொகை, 60.

(ii) புவிமிசை விசிம்பி னீடும் பொருப்பிடை முடவனேறிச்
சுவைதரு தேனையுண்ண எண்ணுவான் துணிதல்
போலும்.

-திருவாலவாயுடையார் திருவிளையாடற் புராணம்.

(iii) முன்னி வான் கொம்பிற் றேனுக் குழன்றதோர்
முடவன்

- பாரதியார்.

4. Agreeing to the Tryst By Night

The confidante speaks:

O wearer of the bright crown whose head is tinct
With the dust of the tinkling ankleted-feet of the Lord
Of *Tillai* whose dance is witnessed by thronging
  demons!
  Impelled by the love for her shoulder,
  You tell me that you'll brave the night to meet her
  And return, when a pride of lions
  Will go a hunting the elephant-herds.
  O, what have I -- the sin-ridden --, to say unto
    the soft one. (151)

Lines 1-2:

Perasiriyar in his commentary observes that the holy dust of the Lord's feet will be the hero's mascot when he is to brave the dreadful lion-infested forest in the night.

Line 3:

The demon-host is part of Siva's entourage.

Lines 6-7:

cf. (i) அணங்குடை யாளி தாக்கலிற் பலவுடன்
கணஞ்சால் வேழம் கதழ் வுற்றாஅங்கு

-பெரும்பாணாற்றுப் படை, 358-359.

(ii) குழிகட்.களிறு வெரீஇ அரியாளிகுழீஇ
வழங்காக் கழிகட் டிரவு.

-திருக்கோவையார், 255.

5. Questioning About the Ways of His Townsfolk

The confidante speaks:

Standing stiff, chest and shoulder erect,
Once in the past, He bent the two ends
Of the mountain into a bow
And shot a dart that consumed His foes in fire.
O Lord of hill, what type of perfume is used
By the sprightly folks of your town, like unto *Tillai*?
In what types of soft shades do they sport?
What types of pollen-laden buds and blooms do they
wear? (152)

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cf. நீடும் புகழரன் கோடீச் சுரவெற்ப நேருளது
நாடுமந் நாட்டு நறுநுதற் பாவையர் நாளுமினி
தாடு மமுதத்தின் சீருந் தளைசெய் தணிதொடையும்
பாடுமப் பாவும் பயிலு மிளமும் பணித்தருளே.

-கோடீச்சுரக் கோவை, 175.

6. Questioning Her Divining Her Intent

The hero speaks:

O goodly girl whose bright eyes are like comely
  flowers
Ebon-hued *Vishnu* hailed Him with a thousand flowers;
When once he but suffered the loss of a single flower
He scooped out his eye and offered it as a flower
At the cool and bright flower-feet of *Ambalam's*
  Lord.
In His southern hill, when they sport, at night
What blooms do your folks wear?
What sandal paste doth perfume them?
In what goodly shades do they play? (153)

Lines 2-5:

cf. மாலாயிரங்கொண்டு மலர்க்கண் ணிடஆழி
ஏலா வலயத்தோ டீந்தா னுறை கோயில்

-திருஞானசம்பந்தர், 1, 82:6.

7. Describing the Trysting Place

The confidante speaks:

Lord *Siva* of *Ambalam* has for His garment,
  the hide
Of a tusker whose trunk was huge as a palmyra tree;
The celestials hail His hallowed feet at *Potiyil* Hill
In whose slopes grow sandal trees from which
Is compounded the famed paste fragrant, for our
  use;
We wear blue lilies of the mountain spring;
We play in the umbrageous garden of *Venkai* trees
On whose branches the green peacocks slumber. (154)

Line 7:

cf. இரவின் இன்துணையாகிய படப்பை வேங்கை

-குறுந்தொகை, 266.

8. Persuading the Heroine to Tryst

The confidante speaks:

Siva transmogrifies the mala-ridden bodies vile
Of His devotees and reserves for them the beatitude
Unattainable by celestials inclusive of *Vishnu*.
In His littoral garden that girds His *Tillai*,
A stout-hearted hero with a sharp spear
Eyed a male-crab dally with its mate;
He was at once plunged in profound sorrow.
I saw him plod his weary way at dusk;
What type of slumber can be have henceforth,
I know not. (155)

Line 1:

The tenement of flesh, in the language of Spenser, is "transmoved" into a Tabernacle of Grace.

Mala : The triple mala of Anava, Kanma and Maya.

Perasiriyar says that the hero was truly stout-hearted as he survived the sight that caused him the greatest sorrow.

Line 6:

cf. Stanza 84, The Tirukkovaiyar.

9. Announcing His Arrival

The confidante speaks:

Oh soft one, the chief of hill, -- that wears a lustrous
crown,
And bows only at the feet of the Ancient
One of *Tillai*
Who shares in His frame His Consort
Of bright and big and beauteous breasts --,
Told me that he would come to the slope of our hill
At dead of night -- when lions roam for prey
And elephants quake with mortal fear,
When louring clouds benight the woods --,
Wading through the dense darkness
Very like the murk of eyes closed tight. (156)

The idea is that the undaunted hero will brave the worst of hazards to meet his beloved.

10. Refusing Pointing Out Perils

The heroine speaks:

The drums at *Chitrambalam* rumble like rain-clouds;
There, great *Vishnu* hails Him with comely fragrant
  flowers.
Like them that sorrow who hail not the feet
  of the Dancer,
Could we put our lordly patron to misery,
  by inviting him
To ply his steps thro' palpable murk and pathless
  woods,
When fierce lions roaring roam
A-hunting the intractable tuskers. (157)

The lover may laugh at difficulties; but the beloved is truly scared of them.

11. Consenting

The heroine speaks:

The peerless Lord of *Ambalam* drank the deadliest poison,
The only one of its type, and saved the celestials.
In His mountain huge when I was caught
And swept away by the rapids
Gushing from the resounding cataract
'Twas the great one that caught me
And brought me safe to the shore.
Ha, what am I, little one, to tell him now! (158)

When the heroine was swept away by the rapids, the hero saved her. He who could save others, could also save himself from dangers. Thus thinks the heroine and consents to trysting.

12. Conveying the Acceptance

The confidante speaks:

O chief of hill where it rains out of season!
Your foresters make noisy offerings to gods
Seeking rain when the green ears of millet-corn
Do wilt by the heat of summer.
To be of gracious help to you at dead of night,
I underwent the miseries suffered by them
That hail not *Tillai*, where the Lord,
The wearer of *Konrai* flowers is enshrined. (159)

The suggestion is that though she is blessed with the grace of Lord, she had to suffer like the graceless, for the sake of the hero.

13. Announcing the Hero's Arrival

The confidante speaks:

He was the only One before the three great worlds
  emerged,
He alone will be,
When all the three worlds are wholly resolved,
He for ever abides at *Chitrambalam.*
  "Like Unto His great grace, a joy peerless
  Is to abide in this house."
  Thus the peacock seems to tell his mate;
  The peafowls sleep not; they grow uproarious.
  What may this be? (160)

It is dead of night. Peafowls that slumbered on the branches of Venkai tree wake up and call to each other. This is indicative of the arrival of the hero.

14. Testing if Mother is Asleep

The confidante speaks:

The Lord of Heaven bent a lethal bow
And burnt the hostile fortresses of the sky;
You are like His rich high-walled *Tillai;*
In the garden that girds our house
A tusker with small eyes and huge white tuskers
Hath pulled out the *naka* tree
Full of blooms and honey-soaked petals
With its pendent swing wrought of precious
gems. (161)

When an incident of this type is narrated, the mother who is abed, -- *had she not slept* --, is bound to spring from her bed to enquire further into the matter. As no such thing happened, it is clear that she is *sound asleep.*

So, trystward ho!

15. Reaching the Destination Quitting Sleep

The confidante speaks:

O beauty, your dark locks are the abode of honey-bees!
He is above the lofty heavens; He is also
Below the nether-most world spacious;
Too He is the centre of the wide sea-clad earth.
He abides in ardent love at *Tillai* in the south.
Lilies, blue like His throat, are burgeoning;
Your eyes flash like angry swords;
Fare forth to see if those lilies match your eyes. (162)

Lines 2-5:

cf. "Beneath the sevenfold gulf, transcending speech,
His flower-foot rests;
With flowers adorned His crown of all the universe
is crown".

– The Tiruvachakam, Tr. G.U.Pope.

16. Leaving, After Taking Her to the Trysting Place

The confidante speaks:

When *Vishnu* prayed: "O *Nandi*, may you grant me
a boon"
And laid at His feet his own eye as a flower-offering,
The Lord granted him a divine disc like his lotus-eye.
You are indeed like His *Puliyur*;
Behold these blue lilies, by your eyes surpassed.
Unto your dark locks, let me fetch
Beauteous sandal leaves and flowers fragrant. (163)

Nandhi : Siva

cf. நந்தி நாமம் நமசிவாயவே

-திருஞானசம்பந்தர்.

17. Emerging Out of Despair, the Hero Speaks

The hero speaks:

He vanquished *Kama* with His eye (of fire);
From your house at *Tillai* closed at eve,
Like a lotus closed by the setting sun many-rayed,
Did you yourself ope the petals of doors
To fare forth hither?
Again, raising up the anklets twain
And holding tight the girdle wide,
Smothering thus their noise,
With soft tread, at dead of night, all alone
You have come to tarry here willingly.
May I know what you long for? (164)

The hero knows that it is at his request-cum-bidding, the heroine has arrived at the trysting place. Yet, he asks her in all naivete, the reason for her coming there at such an unearthly hour, braving all dangers. His great desire is to see her blush.

18. Coming Closer

The hero speaks:

Though her locks are by akil-fumes fed
Though choice flowers bedeck her hair
And tho' her eyes are with collyrium painted,
Yet she cannot afford to wear even a necklace,
For her slender waist may not bear that burden.
Though her languishing waist is about to break
Like them that are hostile to *Siva's Puliyur*,
Her thick-set breasts are swelling in sheer pride. (165)

Line 1:

Akil : Eagle-wood.

Line 8:

The hero has therefore to rush to her and hold her by her bending waist.

19. Rejoicing to Behold Her Visage

The hero speaks:

Our Lord is sweet as honey; of His own free accord,
He saved me from falling into Inferno
And it is He who rules me now.
  She is the budding *Kumutam* honey-laden
  That lies in the field of the young thicket
  That circles *Tillai*, rich in gardens;
  I am indeed the young moon bright on high,
  That with beams doth make that lily-bloom
    blossom. (166)

Line 4:

Kumutam : The blue lily.

20. Sending Her to Bed

The hero speaks:

My victorious Lord, in the past, reduced to slivers
The three towns walled of iron and silver and gold
Belonging to the foes of the celestials.
In my Deity's garden encircling *Tillai*, dear one,
Stand not alone to pluck blue lilies besought
by bees;
May you fare forth with your rare friend
To the bevy of playmates,
There to enjoy slumber sweet. (167)

It is stanzas as this which confound the reader altogether. Unity of time, place and the like lie broken to bits in the *Tirukkovaiyar* which is the recordation of "fine frenzy". And "fine frenzy" according to Shakespeare is sheer poetry.

21. Forbidding His Coming

The confidante speaks:

O Chief of hill, the fire produced by
Friction of bamboos in your forest, spirals aloft
And spreads to the heavenly *Karpaka*-grove.
Easy indeed has become this stone-ridden path
By reason of her whose eye-brow excels its rival,
the bow;
She is like unto *Tillai* whose Lord has three eyes
They being the Sun, the Moon and the Fire.
(Yet I forbid your coming here henceforth). (168)

Perasiriyar in his commentary observes that the fire born out of bamboos does not stay there, but spreads far away and sets ablaze even the heavenly garden. This is suggestive of the fact that the scandalous rumour born out of his trysting has now spread to his very home-town, to the detriment of his glory.

Line 5 :

cf. (i) "…. all the bows of their bent brows
Wound him no more:"

– Gita Govinda, Tr. Edwin Arnold.

(ii) "Thou gavest her those black brows for
a bow"

– Ibid.

22. Grieving at the Separation

The hero speaks:

The big-mouthed, hooded serpent is worn
As a waist-cord by the Supreme One of *Ambalam;*
In the garden green of His *Kailas,* thrives she,
Liana-like, red-lipped and black-eyed,
Bamboo-shouldered and slender-waisted;
As I have, thanks to my askesis in previous births
Come by her who now dwells as a lass of this hill
And who is like *Lakshmi* throned on long-stemmed
lotus
Decked with jewels wrought with consummate skill,
My life doth choose to abide for ever. (169)

Line 5:

Bamboo-shouldered:

cf. "Silk-sheathed shafts of slim bamboo
her slender arms unblemished shine."

- Nala Venba, Tr. Maurice Langton.

23. Urging Him to Wed Her as She grieves for His Hardship

The confidante speaks:

Scared of the hardship you'll encounter on your way
The eyes of the little one which are like long blue lilies,
O prince, shed tears which fall like chains of pearl.
So, you should apply your red lips to the black horn
And blow (it) soon as you reach the border of *Tillai*
Presided over by Him, the First of all entia,
Who wears a crown over His long, thick, matted hair
And whose flowery hands hold a fawn,
A *mazhu* and a hooded serpent with an enormous mouth. (170)

Line 9:

Mazhu : A rod of fire.

24. Sorrowing at the Advent of Moon

The confidante speaks:

When he our tusker, holding the practised spear
In his hand, comes wading through the darkness
Where we await him, you shed over that garden
Rich in honied *naka* blooms,
Your light and scatter, the murk away;
Laudable indeed is your deed!
O moon, this is the hill of Him who dances
In the beauteous *Ambalam*, adored by *Patanjali!*
Be admonished. (171)

Line 8:

Patanjali : The thousand-hooded Adi Sesha incarnated as Patanjali to come by the bliss of beholding Siva's dance.

Lines 3-5:

The moon in Indian mythology dreads the snakes (Raku and Ketu) that devour it. (Eclipse is thus explained.) The snakes are worshippers of Siva. When the hero, a devotee of Siva comes to tryst under cover of night, it is not fair that the moon should shed its rays and reveal the presence of the hero to others. So the confidante pejoratively remarks : "Wise indeed is your deed."

25. Announcement of the Missed Tryst

The confidante speaks:

You are like the extensive *Tillai* of Him
Whose crown wrought of matted hair
Flashes fulgurantly.
On *punnai* trees of pearly buds
And golden pollen,
The grieving swans from their nests have been
Crying aloud sleepless, till day-break;
What may have caused their suffering? (172)

Lines 4-5:

cf. (i) *வளர்புன்னை முத்தரும்பு விரைத்தாது பொன்மணி யீன்று*

-திருஞானசம்பந்தர், 1, 11:7.

(ii) *புன்னைபொன் தாதுதிர் மல்குமந் தண் புகலி*

-திருஞானசம்பந்த்ர், 3, 7:9.

26. Speaking of Distress, Addressing the Sea

The confidante speaks:

O great sea, you in the past, your nectar, *Lakshmi*
  and moon
Had lost; yet are you roaring aloud
Purposeless, making this girl sorely grieve;
You aren't alive to the bane of schadenfreude.
  She is like unto His *Tillai;*
  If devotees hail Him acknowledging
  Their servitude, He causes them
  To be companied with hoary celestials
  To adore Him in holy throngs. (173)

The sea has suffered many a loss. It should therefore be compassionate to them that are in distress. On the contrary, it sets an edge to their suffering by roaring aloud. The confidante therefore reprimands the main.

Schadenfreude : Malicious joy in others' misfortunes.

27. Spoken in Exceeding Passion

The heroine speaks:

He shares His body with His Consort; His bow is
  a hill;
O ye flowery gardens that encircle His *Tillai* city,
Ye backwaters (flowing round the gardens),
And ye beauteous birds (that sport in the waters),
  You wouldn't ask of me thus: "What ails you?"
  Neither would you say: "What makes you wilt thus?"
  Nor would you console me with the solicitous
    query:
  "Why should she suffer for the love of the lord
    of fords?"
  Is this the love, you bear for me; oh, tell me. (174)

Impassioned exclamations are spoken in exceeding passion.

These are known as காம மிக்க கழிபடர் கிளவி Stanzas 111 to 119 of the Tiruvaimozhi belong to this species. Three are the reasons attributed to the heroine's act of pouring out her heart. If the hero overhears, he will hasten to marry her; if the confidante overhears, she will take steps to expedite the marriage. Even if none else hears her, she at least, disburdens her heart.

28. Distressed Speech at the Severity of the Watch

The heroine speaks:

During the glorious festival at night in *Tillai* city
Girt with sweet honey-laden gardens,
Gemmed garlands would blaze as with sunlight
And many a lamp would chase away darkness dense.
  When the lord of the coast comes with his terrible
    spear,
  Should even the inmates of the house slumber
  The dogs would sure bark aloud. (175)

Line 6:

In olden days a strict watch was kept over a nubile girl until her wedding. Her parents and kinnery would watch her even foregoing slumber. If by chance they slept at a time when the lover came to the trysting place near her house, the sleepless dogs would betray his presence by their ceaseless barking.

cf. கடுமை யுடையதடீ-எந்த நேரமும்
காவலுன் மாளிகையில்

-பாரதியார்.

29. Fearing for His Safe Passage Along Hazardous Paths

The confidante speaks:

The Lord is a wearer of *Konrai* garlands,
He is the Lord of *Tillai* with a crown of matted hair.
If you come swimming the innumerable rivers
Flooding from His *Kailas*,
May mighty wrathful lightnings stay, in awe
Of your spear, wielded in many a war;
May you abstain from your visits to the garden
Imbrowned by overhanging clouds
And haunted by fearsome gods.
We are scared of the sylvan deities. (176)

Lires 8-10:

The ancient Tamils believed that their towns, fields, gardens, markets etc., were inhabited by gods. If any wrong occurred in any place, instantaneous punishment was meted out by the god that presided over the concerned region.

30. Dolorous Address to the Moon

The heroine speaks:

He is the Lord of all celestial lords;
In His *Tillai* fecund, with fragrant screw-pine
Girt with soft backwaters, attesting it
The lovely poacher had union with me
Under the virgin *punnai* tree.
O *mandala* bright in heavens throughout the night!
Haven't you eyed him coming this way?
Wouldn't you speak a word to lonely me? (177)

கண்டல் : This is தாழை which is fragrant screw-pine.

cf. கண்டல் திரையலைக்கும் கானலம்

— நாலடியார்.

G.U.Pope describes Kantal as "scented thorn."

Line 6:

cf. "... The autumn moon
Swam silver .... "

- Po Chui, The Lute Girl, Tr. L.Cranmer-Byng.

31. Apprising Him of the Situation

The confidante speaks:

The Supreme One of *Tillai* is desired by the desireless;
Though you walk about the outskirts of our house
Like the Son of Him that abides at *Parankunru*,
Decked with serpents that flourish in ant-hills,
Yet if beholders instead of hailing you as *Muruka*,
And adoring you with great flowers thick-set,
Should entertain hostile thoughts,
Do you think that this damsel can thereafter
breathe? (178)

The confidante discourages the hero's trysting by night. She is afraid that his frequent presence near the house of his beloved, will lead to suspicion fraught with dire consequences.

32. Identifying Her Agitation with the Sea's

The heroine speaks:

He stared the "God of Love," the wielder
Of flowery darts, to cindery dust.
O sea of *Puliyur* that does not transgress limits!
You rise aloft and hug the raised shore,
Roll and fall and rise and roar;
All agitated are you the whole night;
You know not aught of placidity.
Could it be that your mate had forsaken you? (179)

Line 3:

Perasiriyar says that 'செறிவு means the non-transgression of limits (எல்லை கடவாமை).

Lines 6-7:

"The restless sea this night" thought Damayanti was like her who was from her hero separated.

Line 8:

cf. இருளின் திணிவண்ணம் மாநீர்க் கழியே! போய்
மருளுற் றிராப்பகல் துஞ்சிலும் நீ துஞ்சாயால்
உருளும் சகடம் உதைத்த பெருமானார்
அருளின் பெருநசையால் ஆழாந்து நொந்தாயோ?

-நம்மாழ்வார்.

33. The Announcement of the Rumour

The confidante speaks:

Vishnu hailed Him with a thousand flowers
And his thousand hands
Folded in worship at His flower feet;
To him, the Lord of *Tillai* gave a weapon
Whence issues endless lustre.
Sir, your grace true, is now,
From "an unspread rumour"
Grown into "a public calumny." (180)

The title of this stanza is the very title of Chapter 115, Tirukkural. "The public rumour" is the translation thereof, as given by V.V.S.Aiyar. Our translation is the one as given by Dr.G.U.Pope.

Lines 1-5:

cf. நீற்றினை நிறையப் பூசி நித்தல் ஆயிரம் பூக்கொண்டு
ஏற்றுழி ஒருநாள் ஒன்று குறையக் கண்நிறைய விட்ட
ஆற்றலுக்கு ஆழி நல்கி.

-அப்பர், 4, 64:8.

XV. THE STAYING AWAY OF THE HERO

1. Suggestion of Temporary Separation

The confidante speaks:

Fame or blame grows, if grown;
When grown they abide.
By this way only they come to be
And not by themselves.
When you consider this and act,
Blame that besieges the one of soft words
Will cease to be, like the misery of them
That wear on their crowns the flowery feet
Of the Lord of walled and moated *Tillai*. (181)

Two million instances can be cited in proof of the truth contained in lines 1 and 2 of this stanza.

2. Enquiring the Sea about the Hero's Return

The heroine speaks:

O roaring sea, that'll never the limits transgress,
You gird the glorious *Ambar* of the Pure One
Who is the Lord of *Puliyur*; your waves wash the
shore.
He is the lord of the bright ford
Where breakers roll with pearls
And the sea itself is like unto
The cloud-swept and star-studded sky.
The lord of the ford had indeed parted from me;
Did he tell you of his return? (182)

Line 1:

cf. (i) ஆழி கரையின்றி நிற்கும் அதிசயம்
ஆண்டவன் கட்டளை ஆகுமன்றோ!

-திருலோக சீதாராம்.

(ii) "The sea ... follows eternal laws which are imposed by a higher power."

- W.Humboldt.

Line 2:

Ambar : A sacred town. Somasimara Nayanar belonged to this town.

3. Distressed Words Addressed to the Sea

The heroine speaks:

O chief of ford abutting the garden shining far away
Where *punnai* trees expose golden pollen
From their blooms like unto white *Kizhi*
While swarms of bees sing like ministrels!
He hath taken away with him my bangles
White and bright as the moon.
O charging sea, why will you not speak to me of
him? (183)

Kizhi is Kizhitam	: It is a piece of cloth in which are kept tied, gold and other valuables.
Bangles	: Tokens of love.

cf. *"இறைகலந்தவின வெள்வளைசோர என்*
னுள்ளங்கவர் கள்வன்"

-திருஞானசம்பந்தர், 1, 1:6.

4. Beseeching the Swan to Speak

The heroine speaks:

O swan that dwells on lotus wide!
In the fields of *Puliyur* whose Lord smote
Bakan and caused him lose one of his eyes,
The *punnai* tree rich with the sapphire of blue beetles,
The gold of pollen, the pearls of buds
And hanging ear-rings,
Wouldn't say a word, my plight nathless.
Is he who is from me parted,
Parted for ever from our broad fords? (184)

Line 3 :

cf. *உண்ணைப் புகுந்த பகன் ஒளித்து ஓடாமே*
கண்ணைப் பறித்தவா உந்தீ பற!

-திருவாசகம், *14:12.*

Bakan is Bhaga who participated in the sacrifice conducted by Daksha. Like other participants he too was punished by Siva.

The word Kuzhai means (1) twig and (2) ear-ring.

5. Addressing the Sea Beholding the Track of the Chariot

The heroine speaks:

He the Dancer graced me
With a company of devotees true
At which my heart melts
And my body thrills.
O shore-besieging, roaring sea
Where shells sound shrill
And breakers and birds vie with each other!
From His *Puliyur* has departed his huge car;
Pray, do not wash away the mark of
its wheels. (185)

Body thrills : If literally rendered, the passage will mean: "The hair stands on end."

6. Drawing *Kootal* on Sand

The heroine speaks:

Like the grace of the Lord of *Puliyur*
That reforms and uplifts the sea-girt earth,
Sweet was the joy he gave me.
On the heap of sand, made pure by the sea
He took leave of me,
O, let me not engage myself in drawing *Kootal*
And spend my time in misery.
O god of sea, may you flourish
I beg of you to melt his heart
And gift him back to me. (186)

Line 2:

Earth : The dwellers on earth. The figure is metonymy.

Kootal izhaitthal : This is divination by drawing circles on the sand. The lady-love draws a big circle on the sand and within this, smaller and smaller circles are drawn. When this drawing comes to an end, she begins to count them in twos (pairs). If the number arrived at is even, it is supposed that the lover will return. If the number is odd, she cannot think of reunion.

A variation of this divination is as follows:

The Lady-love closes her eyes and draws a circle. If she completes the circle by connecting it where she began, she can be sure of her reunion. If she cannot complete it, no reunion is possible.

cf. *மாட நீள்மருகற் பெருமான் வரில் கூடு நீயென்று*
கூடல் இழைக்குமே

-*அப்பர், 5-88:8.*

7. Distressed Words Addressed to the Sun

The heroine speaks:

He is the lord of the ford like unto the sea,
The field of battle in which are engaged
The four divisions of army, they being
Dark waves, boats tossed about by waves
Sharks and hunters of fishes.
His parting and the solemn words he swore
In the myriad-flowered garden at *Tillai*
Whose Lord wears the very bones of the pure
ones,
Have caused my body suffer like them that are ill.
O setting sun, tell me the way to thrive. (187)

Line 3:

The four divisions of army.

Waves	: Cavalry;
Boats	: Chariots;
Sharks	: Elephantry;
Fishermen	: Infantry.

Line 6 :

Solemn words : Assurance of non-parting from the beloved.

Line 8:

Pure ones : Vishnu and Brahma.

8. Gloom at the Gloaming

The heroine speaks:

Sunk is the sun; he that can save me
Is far away;
To their nests in the garden green of *Tillai*
Where the Lord abides,
Swans that were feeding on
The *Kozhu*-fish of the black backwaters wide
Had Slunk;
(Alas, poor me!)
The Lord of *Tillai* is the refuge of the desireless,
None returns from Him if oned with Him;
He is the One who ought to be hailed by
every one. (188)

Line 1:

Save me : Save me from tormenting night.

Kozhu-fish : A species of the finny drove.

9. Words of Distress Addressed to the Birds

The heroine speaks:

I inly ail like them who hail not
The Lord of *Puliyur*, whose matted hair is
Bright as gold, brilliant as ruby and lustrous as coral.
In joy do the storks
Feed themselves by day
On the black backwaters wide.
They aren't alive to my soul's agony.
I sure have sinned. (189)

The storks but think with their belly; they are indifferent to the heroine's distress.

10. The Empathy of the Lotus-Clan

The heroine speaks:

He, the Lord-Hero of *Tillai* smote the triple fortresses
Which could strike such terror in their foes
That they would die instantaneously one and all.
"Crossing His Bow, Mount *Meru*, the sun hath
Covered full many a league
Leaving the world to darkness and to me."
Thus thinking, the lotuses of the dark backwaters
And green garden-pools by the shore,
Fold their petalled hands in tearful prayer. (190)

Line 4:

His Bow : Siva's bow is Mount Meru.

Line 9:

கண்ணீர் as கண் + நீர் means tears; as கள் + நீர் means the liquid of honey.

Lotuses shed tears of honey. They are compassionate; they fold their hands in worship and breathe a prayer to the sun-god to succour the distressed woman. Unlike the swans and the storks the lotus seems to say:

"Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco"
(Not unacquainted with misfortunes, I learn
to help the
wrethched ....) - Aeneid, 1, 630.

cf. mollissima corda
Humano generi dare se Natura fatetur,
Quae lacrymas dedit. Haec nostri pars optima
sensus.

(Nature, who has given tears, acknowledges that she has given very tender hearts to the human race. This is the noblest part of our feeling. (Juvenal, XV, 131-133).

11. Pining at the Indifference of the Swans

The heroine speaks:

The Primordial One of Grace is the Lord of *Mooval;*
He is the wealth unsurpassed of *Tillai;*
All His fourfold regions girt by water threefold
Are now in sleep immersed;
I alone am awake
Parted from the hand
That should protect me enfolding.
Without conveying my plight to my lover
The pitiless pens, in sheer joy
Hug their cobs, and slumber
With nought to worry them at all. (191)

Line 1:

Mooval : This town near Mayuram, is now known as Moovaloor.

Line 3:

Water threefold : The sea.

12. Addressing the Moon, Sensing His Arrival

The confidante speaks:

O effulgent moon, you are a witness
To her distress; she suffers from his absence
Who is gone like them that pitiless went away
Unendowed with the grace of *Tillai's* Ancient One.
"Her bangles stay not; her heart melts;
Her long eyes that know not to shut in sleep, rain
Lustrous, pearly teardrops in successive rows."
I beseech you to convey all this to him. (192)

Lines 1-4:

cf. "Under the crescent moon's faint glow
The washerman's bat resounds afar,
And the autumn breeze sighs tenderly.
But my heart has gone to the Tartar war,
To bleak Kansuh and the steppes of snow,
Calling my husband back to me."

- *Li Po, Tr. L.Cranmer-Byng.*

13. Conveying Her Exceeding Grief

The confidante speaks:

O Chief of mountain cool and great,
Unaware of its act, the young female monkey
Ate the creeper, pepper and all,
And sore languishes in misery.
  Bright is her forehead who is like *Puliyur*
  The Lord of which in His crown of matted hair
  Sports a moon, white and great.
  Gone is her body's lustre which is now sallow;
  She trips and falls on her bed;
  Up she gets but to break her breath into sighs;
  She has grown utterly famished. (193)

Lines 2-4:

The female monkey attracted by the pepper creeper chose to eat it and suffer therefor. The heroine drawn by the hero, had union with him and now suffers for it.

XVI. ELOPEMENT

1. Apprising Her Nubility

The confidante speaks:

One half of His form is a beauteous woman;
The other half is a handsome man;
She of the bright forehead is like His *Tillai*.
Shining streaks of gold-dust bedaub her breasts;
They are steeped in sweet perfume;
Within them bubbles nectar.
O patron, when our kin behold
Their swelling wealth of lustre
Will they entertain no thoughts? (194)

Line 9:

It means they will surely think of marrying her betimes to a proper man.

2. Speaking of Proposals

The confidante speaks:

O lord of the ford, it is time you decide
About your relationship with her
Who is like unto *Tillai;*
Others are coming with gold and more gold
(Wherewith to deck her in marriage).
The Supreme One wears bones as gems;
The celestials bewildered by the upsurge of poison
Hailed Him in all humility;
He graced them with His mercy. (195)

The confidante whips the hero with such words as bones and poison. His meetings and matings will wind up bone-poisoning, unless he can, like his Lord Siva, act and make nectar out of poison.

3. Betrothal is in the Offing

The confidante speaks:

Lord of flowery ford! At *Tillai* whose Lord
Is bedecked with serpents as with jewels,
They invest her, in whose soft locks,
Flutters many a flower,
With hallowed *raksha*,
Eftsoons they'll adorn her with gold.
From the quardrangle inside the house
Where flagmasts rise aloft piercing the sky,
-- Decorations fit for the festivity of marriage --,
Drums of wedding in beauteous rows will resound
And conch and chunk will trumpet aloud.
(Hasten to do what is meet). (196)

Line 5:

(Raksha-bandhanam) : Investiture of mascot. Chanting mantras, a twine soaked in turmeric powder is wound round the wrist of the bride on the eve of her marriage.

4. Speaking of Her Inestimable Worth

The confidante speaks:

The Lord is decked with bones; He abides at *Ambalam*.
O chief of hill, even if you offer
The entire world -- goodly and wide --,
Of those who resolve to dwell within His precincts
As the price for her slender waist
Whose eyes are like the slices of a tender mango,
Our kin, the mountaineers, will not deem it adequate;
So can you ever hope to assess the worth
Of her ornate breasts? (197)

Line 4:

Those : The jivan-muktas; the liberated while yet alive.

Line 4:

His precincts : The realm of Godly Wisdom.

5. His Amazement at Her Incalculable Worth

The hero speaks:

She of fair breasts is like unto *Siva's Tillai;*
Her forelap is like the hood of the cobra living
in anthill;
The dew of her white teeth (is honey);
Her words are fluten melody."
O goodly heart, you think on the joys in them enclosed,
And languish, oblivious of unattainability;
Like the child that cries for the moon in the sky
You'll have to sob and sob with tear-bedewed
eyes. (198)

The hero is not dead to the greatness of his beloved. Indeed, time was when he even wondered if his union with her was but a dream. Vide stanza 17. However easy accessibility as well as familiarity, it is well known, tends to screen the true worth of anything. Now, when he is reminded by the words of the confidante which fell like a ton of bricks, of the matchless glory of his beloved, he is truly bewildered.

6. Speaking of Her Languishment

The confidante speaks:

The golden bangled damsel whose *alkul* is
A lustrous cobric hood,
Beholding the sea of black breakers and the garden
On the sea-shore rich with petalled flowers
Of fragrant screw-pine,
At azure-throated Lord's *Tillai*
Tearfully embraced all her playmates
Whose waists were so slim
That they seemed not to exist at all. (199)

Lines 3-5:

The heroine was Nature's own child. The sea and its shore, the garden and its flowers are dear to her.

The suggestion is that the heroine is about to part from her friends, for good. Kalidasa's description of Sakuntala's leave-taking, it is well-known, is full of tender pathos.

7. Hinting

The confidante speaks:

The Lord shares in His form His soft-eyed Consort
Whose looks excel those of antelope's.
My lady decked with golden bangles
Hugged me and gave me her starling;
She also gave me her ball wrought of plates of gold,
Again she gave me her dolls and her parakeet.
I divine not the intention of her
Whose eyes are black and whose lips are red
As *Kovvai* that flourishes in fecund *Tillai*. (200)

Lines 4-6:

cf. பூவை தந்தாள் பொன்னம் பந்து தந்தாள்
பாவை தந்தாள் பைங்கிளி அளித்தாள்

-ஐந்திணை ஐம்பது, 33.

Line 7:

When the heroine chose to give away her birds and dolls to her friend, her intention was truly made manifest. She was to part from her friend also. The stage had been set for her elopement with her lover.

8. Narration of the Hardship

The hero speaks:

All the celestials cultivate and hymn His praise;
He is the Lord of *Puliyur* who wears
The bright crescent as a garland on His crown.
O goodly girl of soft mien
That wears lily wreaths!
Huge indeed are her breasts;
Lightning-like is her waist;
Flowers are they, her soft feet.
The torrid forest 'mongst stony hills
Will burn, as with fire;
Our town too, is far far away. (201)

When the intention of the heroine is made manifest to the hero by the confidante, he is worried about the venture. No doubt, the hero is worried. However he worries not about himself. He is tormented by the agony which his beloved must needs undergo.

9. Speaking of Love's Assurance

The confidante speaks:

Sir, to my damsel the gold-bangled,
Even the steep rocky wilderness
Where buck and roe, driven by thirst
Run after the wild mirage,
Will be like a cool flowery pond
In the *maruta* realm of *Tillai*
Where abides the incomparable Lord infinite,
If she but journeys with you. (202)

When Rama told Sita that she should not accompany him to the fiery forest, Sita questioned him thus: "Will the vast forest be more fiery than your parting?"

The confidante goes a step further and says that the rocky wilderness will be like a cool flowery pond to the heroine, if she be but permitted to accompany him.

10. Informing Him of the Likelihood of Death

The confidante speaks:

On His red matted hair the Lord sports the peerless
  Ganga;
He has an eye in His forehead;
  In His *Tillai* which is ever guarded
  You are a huge pond with lotus leaves;
  The girl whose eyes are like black carp
  Is indeed a red carp that thrives there.
  Sir, how can you speak of her
  As one that is unrelated to you? (203)

Lines 6-8:

What is insisted is togetherness, and not otherness. If the carp is separated from water it will cease to breathe.

cf. Lakshmana's words to Rama.

"நீர்உள எனின் உள மீனும் நிலமும்"

-கம்பன்.

11. Speaking in Praise of Chastity

The confidante speaks:

The Lord who gloriously abides at *Eenkoy*
Dances at *Chitrambalam;*
O woman, whose forehead is like a crescent,
Great are you as you are well-versed
In the very words of the Dancing Lord;
To women, bashfulness is great as one's mother;
O beautiful one whose shoulders are like bamboo,
Even that isn't is great as firm chastity. (204)

Line 1:

Eenkoy : Eenkoy is a hill sacred to Saivites.

Lines 6-8:

cf. (i) உயிரினும் சிறந்தன்று நாணே நாணினுஞ்
செயிர்தீர் காட்சிக் கற்புச் சிறந்தன்று

-தொல். களவியல், 22.

(ii) பேணிலவாயிற் பெற்றிருந் தாயிற் பெரிதெனச் சொல்
நாணினு நற்பொருள் கற்பாவதே யென்று நங்கையர்க்கே

-கலைசைக் கோவை, 328

12. Speaking of His Determination

The confidante speaks:

O daughter of the hill tribe!
Should an evil beset you, resulting in
Forgetfulness of the Lord's *Puliyur*
And you be born successively
In every species of life imaginable,
He that is fit to be united with you
In all such births,
Is now thinking of adorning your locks
Decked with *venkai* flowers,
Also with blooms of *Konku*
And honey-laden *padiri*. (205)

The suggestion is that the hero thinks of eloping with her and that their journey will be across the desert where bloom konku and padiri.

Venkai : The kino tree.

Konku : A species of the cotton tree.

Padiri : The trumpet-flower tree; (Bignonia chelonoides.)

13. Seeking the Reason for His Determination

The heroine speaks:

The once-shady-ways now lie singed and waterless;
It is said, the forest where old jackals howl aloud
Abounds in sharp gravels the tips of which glow
like fire.
O dear one whose words are sweet as melodic flute,
Like them that have not learnt to bow
Their heads at the feet of the Lord of *Tillai Ambalam*
And fold their flower-like hands in worship
Why should our prince think of
Treading pitiless paths? (206)

Lines 1 to 3 describe truly the Palai region. Palai, truly speaking is not the desert. See introduction.

14. Informing her of the Reason for Departure

The confidante speaks:

You two are like body, and life animating it;
I would forbid his coming hither, scared of
Lions and other wild animals that roam in *Kailas*
The Lord of which is the God of *Chitrambalam*.
Even if he offers the whole earth girt by seas
Abounding in waves which chase one another,
Our kin will not suffer him to wed you.
So it is, he is determined to trek (with you)
The arid desolate wilderness wild. (207)

Line 1:

It is not explained here, who the body is and who the life thereof. The stress is solely on the indispensability of the one to the other.

15. Sorrowing for the Loss of Modesty

The heroine speaks:

In *Puliyur* beloved of the Lord whose bull
Well-nourished flourishes gambadoing,
Divine modesty twin-born with me throve bright.
Alas, the love that I bear for the chief of hill,
Hath now smitten and smothered it.
The fierce blast of chastity clean uprooting it
From me, hath thrown it away.
May modesty quit me for good;
May women be never born in our family
For seven generations to come. (208)

Modesty is a queenly virtue. It is twin-born with a woman. She should not forsake it. Yet a situation has arisen when the heroine has to make her choice between modesty and chastity. Chastity, is indeed the virtue of virtues. Obviously the heroine prefers chastity to modesty. Yet the choice is not made without the pangs of conscience. Elopement which involves forfeiture of modesty, it should be known, is hailed as அறத்தொடு நிற்றல் (poised in chastity) by Tamil literature.

Why should an innocent tender girl suffer like this? We give the answer in the words of Triloka-Sitaram:

துன்பா லெழுந்து தோயாத போது
தூண்டாத வின்ப மெதுவும்
வன்பா லெழுந்து வாட்டாத போது
வளராத அன்பும் நிலையோ?

16. Informing Him of His Courage

The confidante speaks:

O trustworthy one, long are the rufescent lines
Of her eyes, scared of which arrows lie hid in quivers;
To her small and pretty feet that are atremble
Should they even step on red silk-cotton,
The stony wilderness you are to tread on
Will be like a way damasked with tender leaves
As in *Sivanagar* the Lord of which
Smote *Jalandara* who scorned trembling away. (209)

Lines 3-4:

cf. *மஞ்சிலோதிய ரம்மலர்ச் சீறடி*
. . . .
பஞ்சி மேலும் பணிக்கும் பணிக்குமே.

-சீவக சிந்தாமணி, 134.

Line 8:

Jalandara : Siva in the hoary past, cast away his wrath against Indra into the sea. It assumed the form of a demon that came to be called Jalandara. The Asura waxed great in strength and ultimately challenged Siva Himself. The Lord then drew a sprocket-wheel on earth and bade Jalandara to lift it. As the demon tried to lift it, it cut him into two and was then added to the weaponry of the Lord.

17. Apprising Him of the Trysting Place

The confidante speaks:

She indeed is my life, and you are to her
Her very life, rare and great.
Impelled by your gracious love for her, I'll seek
The swelling darkness, dear to us.
As in the dark when golden flowers of *makizh* fall
We take it for the sign made by you.
Ha! The darkness is like unto the hue
Of the Ancient One's throat and it spreads
Like the black sins of those who think not
Of bowing their heads in worship at the Lord's
Ambalam. (210)

Trysting Place : Actually it is the venue fixed for the meeting of the lovers for their elopement.

Line 5:

Makizh : A tree whose flower has a pleasing and lasting fragrance, called Vakulam (Mimusops).

18. His Misery on Thinking of the Hard Way to be Trodden by Her Soft Feet

The hero speaks:

The Lord wears the moist moon
And the gushing flood on His crown.
The feet of her who hails from His *Puliyur*
Are small and beauteous as *aniccha* blooms.
Alas, alas! She is to cross the forest
Full of fiery gravels, red as ruddy fruitage.
What worse sorrow can betide her,
The bright girdled beauty? (211)

Line 4:

Aniccha : A plant, the flowers of which are very delicate. Its flower, it is said, fades away the moment one inhales its fragrance. The compeer of aniccha flower in softness and delicacy is the down of swan. These are compared to the tender soles of a soft belle.

cf. அனித்த மிதிப்பினும் பனித்த லானா
ஒளிச் செஞ் சீறடி

-பெருங்கதை, *I, 53:162*.

19. The Heroine Led to the Hero

The confidante speaks:

As in minds of them that hail not *Tillai*
The King of which is azure-throated,
Dense darkness has sway over the whole world;
Pellucid indeed are the gloried ponds
Like their minds who hail it.
  This hoary fortressed town now slumbers;
  O patron who rides a chariot encircled by
  Young attendants armed with sharp spears,
  God'll grant you that, your heart is after. (212)

Lines 1-3:

cf. வானில் வடிந்த மையிருள் நெடிய
மலையில் இறங்கி மண்மிசை அடர்ந்த
கானில் தியங்கிக் கடுவெளி தாண்டிக்
கருத்திலா வாழ்விற் கலுழும் மானுடப்
பொய்நிறை உள்ளப் பொந்தில் நுழைந்து
புகுந்தது கண்டேன்.

-திருலோக சீதாராம்.

20. Proclaiming Permanent Entrustment

The confidante speaks:

O chief of hill, she is like *Tillai* in the South
The Lord of which is a famed Dancer of fire;
He smote the cities that flew in the sky --
The constant dread of celestials --;
Should your grace that for ever
Regulates and sustains righteousness, swerve
In this wide wide world,
Gospels rare will turn topsy-turvy
And the entire sea will get dried-up. (213).

Lines 5-9:

cf. Mortals that would follow me,
Love Virtue, she alone is free,
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher, than the sphery chime;
Or if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

- Milton.

21. Bidding them Adieu

The confidante speaks:

May you both gloriously fare forth to the distant
  city of *Tillai*
The Lord of which who for ever abides at *Ambalam*
By the sheer force of His love held me
And granted me this day bliss unending.
  I'll prevent the pursuit of her friendly host
  And also her mother, making them here tarry;
  I'll soon quieten all rumour
  And join you both in good time. (214)

The confidante is truly the alter ego of the heroine. Her love for the heroine outweighs even the hero's love for the heroine. The sun it shines and the rain it rains on account of such selfless love.

22. Leading Gently the Lady-Love

The hero speaks:

The Lord of growing lustre decks Himself
With huge serpents, having tamed them;
Like His *Puliyur* of swelling effulgence
On either side of our way and close to each other
Lie majestic towns built with faultless craftsmanship;
The forests that lie ahead of us look as though
They have been cleared for us.
My little one whose pretty feet are adorned with
  jewels
Wrought by skilful hands, so pleasing to me
May you tread the way softly and gently. (215)

Line 7:

Pleasure : *Joy of sight-seeing.*

23. Proclaiming His Valour

The hero speaks:

Like them that have not in clarity of wisdom
Hailed the feet of the Lord that abides in *Ambalam*,
I'll suffer from the fear of confusion
If they that come towards us are your brothers.
(If they aren't your brothers), then, even if
Chariots that sport flags, throngs of warriors
And mighty band of elephantry
Should combine against me
They will not be sufficient prey for this --
My sharp and shapely spear cast of sturdy steel.
O girl of fragrant locks ever-sought by buzzing bees,
Behold my deeds of valour, in this hill sky-high. (216)

The source of this stanza is traceable to sutra 41, Akatthinai, Porul Atikaram, Tolkappiyam:

இடைச்சுர மருங்கின் அவள் தமர் எய்திக்
கடைக் கொண்டு பெயர்தலிற் கலங்கஞ ரெய்திக்
கற்பொடு புணர்ந்த கௌவை யுளப்பட
வப்பாற்பட்ட வொரு திறத்தானும்.....

Here, however, the hero is put to no embarrassment.

24. Curing Her of Her Fatigue

The hero speaks:

We'll even now cross this desert, the seat of sorrow
And the haunt of sinners of evil deeds
Who did not in their previous births
Think of coming by the grace of the Ancient One.
We'll this day reach *Puliyur* in the South,
glowing with
Auric and beauteous mansions with gems inlaid;
We'll here behold my Lord in *Chitrambalam*
Who dances as His devotees hail Him in hymn
and song. (217)

Line 8:

Hymn and song : The original says that the worshippers sing "Tenna." This word means "He of the South;" it is also a melodic note with which the alapana (music preamble) commences.

25. Urging Him to Proceed No Further

The beholders speak:

O hero, there aren't good people on your way:
There are but hunters who are tough fighters:
You are alone; she whose locks are decked with
Soft-petalled flowers is surely exhausted.
  Like them that aren't devoted to the Lord
  Of ever-during *Chitrambalam*,
  The sun shorn of his lustre, his beams withdrawing
  Has sunk into the ocean-stream.
  None there is who will trek this wilderness now. (218)

Certain good people who inhabit the area through which the lovers journey forth, entreat them to break their journey and spend the night in their house where tapers burn hospitably.

26. The Rejoicing of Beholders

The beholders speak:

Knit in love, the hero sometimes walks behind her
Whose lips articulate words passing sweet;
Sometimes, she whose shoulders are bamboo-like
Follows him for a long time.
Crossing the desert does not appear to be
their aim;
Like bees inebriate that sip honey
From the bright flowers of the fields of *Tillai*
Which look as though sheer gold swelled into
such shape,
That the Lord may thither abide;
They but enact a drama of delight. (219)

According to the old commentary, the hero walks behind his love to feast his eyes on her slender form and nimble gait; the damsel follows him to eye his புறக்கொடை (form behind) and வழிச்செலவு (ambling gait).

27. Sporting on the Way

The hero speaks:

He is the Lord of all the heavenly worlds;
The King of *Tillai* who shares in His frame
The Soft One -- His Consrot --, is my Lord;
Blessed are my eyes as they have beheld you;
O commanding beauty, come close to me that I
  may
Drink deep with my ears your soft melodic words
Till this arid wilderness gets cool
Like the cool pool at His *Kadampai*. (220)

Katampai : This is perhaps Tirukkadampur, west of Tillai. Katampan is Murukan. St. Manickavachakar adores Him who is hailed by St. Appar thus:

"நங் கடம்பனைப் பெற்றவள் பங்கினன்"

28. Informing them of the Nearness of the City

Beholders speak:

With her whose waist in lightning-like,
If you cross the hill of the Lord of *Chitrambalam*
And leg a little,
You'll behold the lofty city
Girt by a beauteous moat where teem bright lotuses
And dight with tanks to the bathing-ghats of which
Stream women of white teeth singing Vallai-songs. (221)

வள்ளைப்பாட்டு: A type of song usually sung when dehusking grains. The foot-note to Silappatikaram says that it is ***உலக்கைப் பாட்டு*** (pestle-song) i.e., song sung at the time of dehusking grains with pestles.

Kalinkatthu-p-Parani says:

"வள்ளைபாடி ஆடி ஓடிவா எனா அழைக்குமே"

29. Pointing Out the City

The hero speaks:

In the good great city that lies before us
Flourish swans whose gait is like your own;
Over the mansions appears the crescent as in
  Siva's crown;
Like Him they are also with spears decked;
Young girl, the lofty flags -- lightning-like --,
Flutter like waves in the vast sea of sky;
The walls of the city, all wrought with gold
Are like Mount *Meru* in the north.
Behold *Puliyur*, the city of wonder and splendour. (222)

Line 2:

cf. (i) மயில் கண்டன்ன மடநடை மகளிர்

-திருமுருகு. 205.

(ii) மயில் நடைச்சியர்

திருப்புகழ்.

(iii) மானின் விழிபெற்று மயில் வந்ததென வந்தாள்

-கம்பன்.

Line 4:

They : The mansions.

30. Describing the Greatness of the City

The hero speaks:

Yonder are the man-made monticles;
These are the tanks where fair flowers blossom;
Those are the gardens over which the moon rests
Fatigued of the journey in the sky.
Beyond these, yon lie holy places
Where, they that are in *Vedas* well-versed
Chant *Vedas* that falsehood may wane away from
  the world.
O bejewelled, this is the place, where the Lord
Who made a bow of the hill, abides. (223)

Line 9:

The Lord who bent Mount Meru into a bow is called குன்ற வில்லாளி — by St. Kumara Gurupara.

31. The Search by the Foster-Mother

The nurse speaks:

She was a peafowl;
She was lithe like a liana;
Her looks were those of antelope's;
Her speech was like *Kuyil's;*
O, where is she, our child?
  Your locks are decked with flowers of *Tillai;*
  The Lord of *Tillai* for ever in my heart abides;
  He knows not of parting from me.
  Your eyes that roll, are sharp like spear.
  Wherefore do you grieve this day? (224)

The scene changes : We are now in the home-town of the heroine. The nurse beholding her daughter (confidante) who is unable to hide her sadness, questions her about the whereabouts of the heroine.

37. Poised in Righteousness

The confidante speaks:

Even to *Vishnu* are His feet inaccessible
Though they are easy of access to them of *Tillai*;
In His hill, our damsel of bright forehead
Whose eyes are beauteous with thin red lines,
Once, as a child was building doll-houses of sand;
Thither came a lad, lion-like, with a flaming spear;
From him she received for her doll
A wreath of colourful blooms
In the presence of her play-mates. (225)

When a girl receives a garland from a lad, it means that she desires to become his spouse. Though the incident spoken to above, happened in her childhood, she could not ignore it. Her elopement is therefore both just and justifiable.

33. It Attests Her Chastity; Yet I have to Grieve For Her

The nurse speaks:

It is not becoming of her whose flowery eyes
Are like two symmetrically-slit slices of tender
  mango;
Yet there is nothing left for us to do unto her --
Our little mother;
However, to him-- her retriever --,
We can do what is good.
  The Lord -- the Ancient One that knows no de-
    crease --,
  Destroyed the triple fires of *Daksha's* sacrifice.
  In his *Tillai*, when she got drowned
  As she plunged and bathed,
  In the tank bright with the flowers of iris-hues,
  Moved by pity, he dived, hugged her
  And joyously retrieved her. (226)

Line 1:

It : The interregnum between the lady-love's separation from her parents and her marriage; the pre-marital consortium.

Line 4:

little mother : The foster-mother addresses her daughter as 'mother,' owing to excessive affection.

Line 6:

The good that is referred to here, is matrimony.

Lines 9-13 :

This incident is narrated by the foster-mother obviously on the strength of the information she has received from the confidante.

34. Speaking in Grief

The nurse speaks:

O bejewelled lustre, (as a child) you smiled at me;
You kissed my breasts and hugged me close;
Many indeed were your jests and tricks;
Was all this done by you
Only to part from me by crossing the wild desert
-- Fit habitat of them that hail not *Chitrambalam*
The Lord of which smote Death
Whose wrath could all things annihilate. (227)

The pathetic reminiscences of the nurse are narrated here.

Lines 1 to 3:

cf. "Jest and youthful jollity
Quips and cranks and wanton wiles
Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles."

- Milton.

35. Pitying the Plight of Her Feet

The nurse speaks:

He alone is His peer; none else His equal is;
O girl, if in His *Tillai*, you were to tread even on
Cool *aniccha* flowers, your feet would quiver
And turn sore with blisters and boils;
Alack a day! I am sure sin-ridden!
Could you, oh little mother borne by me, have plied
Your ankleted feet in the forest
Aflame with gravels blazing like spearpoints
red-hot? (228)

Lines 2-4:

cf. அனிச்சமும் அன்னத்தின் தூவியும் மாதர்
அடிக்கு நெருஞ்சிப் பழம்

-குறள், 1120.

Line 6:

In excessive endearment a mother calls her own daughter, her mother.

36. Informing the Mother

The nurse speaks:

If in slumber my hand that embraced her
Was a trifle loosened, she the child, would feel
So lonesome and heart broke, that she of pretty words,
Would indulge in foolish mewling and wailing.
Like the misery that wastes them who hail not
The beauteous feet of the Dancer at *Ambalam*
Who ate poison that the celestials should thrive,
I wilt by sorrow, caused by her fond act
(of elopement). (229)

Line 4:

cf. "Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms."
- As You Like It -- 2, 7, 144.

37. The Sorrowing of the Goodly Mother

The mother speaks:

Soft and melodic are her words like notes* of *yazh*
And hard indeed is her heart;
The fond girl went away with a stranger;
She foresook her friend; me, she had already forsaken.
She went trekking the arid desert which is
Like them that adore not the *Ambalam*
The Lord of which, once in the distant past
Gifted a divine disc to *Vishnu* who adored Him.
Our foes are busy fabricating slanderous rumour
With which the whole of this old town is agog. (230)

Lines 9-10:

cf. "People worm themselves into secrecies
avid for slick vanities."

— Tryst with the Divine, Dr. K.R.S.Iyengar.

38. Distressed by the Plight of Her Parakeet

The mother speaks:

They that hail not the Lord of *Ambalam*
Who holds a trident whose tip deals death
(Are condemned to roam the arid wilderness).
"How did she, the cruel one, cross mountainous
  paths?
Where could she have rested on the way?"
As I thus mused and spake aloud,
Her parakeet, bewildered by the parting
Of her, who was to her, a mother, cried:
"O gone is my mother! Where may she be?
I am now sure a prey for the kite!"
I grieve not so much for her parting
As for the heart-rending grief of her parrot. (231)

Lines 7-12:

cf. *செம்பொன் வள்ளத்துத் தீம்பாலூட்டும்*
எம்மனைவாரான் என்செய்தனள் எனப்
பைங்கிளி காணாது பயிர்ந்து நிற்கூஉம்
அஞ்சொற் பேதாய் அருள்....

-பெருங்கதை, 1-3, 168-171.

39. Entreating the Sun

The mother speaks:

The Lord hath put an end to the cycle
Of my birth and death for hailing Him (devoutly);
We grieve here, I -- her mother, and her parakeet.
Even as you make the lotus, rich in bees and honey,
At His *Tillai* bloom softly and gently,
May you make the visage of her
That through the fiery forest waded, bloom soft.
This I implore of you, oh Day-star! (232)

Lines 7-9:

cf. *"எரியே! அவனைச் சுடல்!" என்றாள்*

-கம்பன்.

Line 9:

Day-star : Sun

40. Grieving, Thinking on Her Tender Age

The mother speaks:

In the hill of the Lord of *Tillai*,
When she eyes a *Kantal* rich in serried petals,
Deeming it a snake, she'll hasten away to hide herself,
Close her eyes with flowery hand and tremble.
Her bright eyes are tinct with collyrium;
Her gait is like a peacock's at rainy season.
Can she keep the home for him, the one
That has a sharp sword with a wreath? (233)

Lines 1-2:

cf. (i) சிலம்புடன் கமழும் அலங்கு குலைக் காந்தள் நறும்தாது
ஊதும்.......தும்பிபாம்பு உமிழ் மணியில் தோன்றும்

-குறுந்தொகை, 239.

(ii) பாம்பு பை அவிழ்ந்தது போலக் கூம்பிக் கொண்டவிற்
தொலைந்த ஒண் செங்காந்தள்

-குறுந்தொகை, 185

(iii) காந்தளும் பாந்தளைப் பாரித் தலர்ந்தனவே

-திருக்கோவையார், 324

41. Deciding to go in Quest of Her

The nurse speaks:

At the sacrifice that *Daksha* performed
The celestials slandered the Lord of *Ambalam*
Whose glory pervades limitless,
And forfeited their triple fires, heads and eyes
And ran in all directions
Which I'll now tread in quest of the golden one.
Dear one whose shoulders are bamboo-like
Be rid of misery. (234)

It is thus the nurse consoles the heroine's mother.

Lines 2-5:

cf. (i) சிந்தித் திசை திசையே தேவர்களை ஓட்டுகந்து
-திருவாசகம், 8:15.

(ii) சாடிய வேள்வி சரிந்திடத் தேவர்கள்
ஓடிய வாபாடி உந்திபற
-திருவாசகம், 14:5.

42. Bidding the Crow to Caw and Augur their Advent

The mother speaks:

Five are your great traits, oh great corbie
And pleasing are your pranks;
She is like *Tillai* the crown of whose Lord
Sports the five-headed serpent of swaying hoods;
If you can by your cawing cause her, --
The soft one fragrant --, and her prince
Come here at once, you may fearlessly
Feast on grains placed in the sun to dry;
Again, food liberally mixed with fat --
Our offering to the deity --,
Will be wholly yours. (235)

Line 1:

The five great traits of the crow are:

1. *mating in absolute secrecy;*
2. undauntedness;
3. getting back to the nest in time after sun-set;
4. wide-ranging sight and
5. non-indolence.

The quintuple virtues of the corbie are recorded (slightly differently) thus in an old Tamil poem.

காலை எழுந்திருத்தல் காணாம லேபுணர்தல்
மாலை குளித்து மனைபுகுதல் - சாலவே
உற்றாரோ டுண்ணல் உறவாடல் இவ்வைந்தும்
கற்றாயோ காக்கைக் குணம்

The cawing of the crow is indicant of the arrival of guests or friends or relations.

கரையாய், காக்கைப் பிள்ளாய்!
கருமாமுகில் போல் நிறத்தன்
உரைஆர் தொல்புகழ் உத்தமனை வர
கரையாய், காக்கைப் பிள்ளாய்!
-திருமங்கை ஆழ்வார்

Line 8: **உணங்கல்**

: 1. Grain that is being dried
2. Food material that is being dried. The word also means (1) dried grain and (2) dried food material.

43. Having Recourse to Astrology

The nurse speaks:

O *noble ones in Vedas* well-versed
Scrutinise, and do tell us
By your flawless prognostication,
If, by the grace of the Ancient One at South *Tillai*
Who once ate the devastatingly raging poison,
We can secure her, whose locks
Are decked with ever-fragrant flowers,
And arrange her wedding
In this our, well-guarded house. (236)

It is said, astrology is good, though astrologers are bad. The nurse approaches the noble ones, for she wants to know the truth and not hear pleasing words which will ultimately prove futile.

44. Coming to Know by Beholding the Footprints

The nurse speaks:

These pretty footprints on thorny mound
  gravel-ridden --
The treading ground of them that hail not *Ambalam*
The crown of whose Lord sports a mighty flood
  lucid --,
Are hers, whose dazzling eyes are like weapons;
'Tis I -- the sin-ridden --, that did bring her up;
Those, methinks, are those of the deceitful one
Who in strength is a match for a tusker. (237)

Line 6:

Those : Footprints.

The word பகடு here translated as tusker, also means 'bull'.

45. Moved by the Footprints

The nurse speaks:

Even when she were to step on a beauteous quilt
Her feet would get blistered and cause her pain,
A pain like the one that grieves them who hail
not
The ankleted feet of the Lord of *Ambalam*
Who wears milk-white stripes of holy ashes.
Those flowery bejewelled feet of her, borne
by sinful me,
This day, have had to walk behind a mighty youth,
Over the forest full of gravel, sharp as spear. (238)

The nurse is more than a mother to the heroine. Her love for the heroine is even greater than her love for her own daughter, the confidante.

46. Interrogating a Huntress

The nurse speaks:

O gold-bangled, bright beauty that gathers flowers,
O wearer of the jewelled cord set with tiger's teeth,
She has braved the desert and so
She is sure past her nonage of innocence.
In those days, when I left the inner yard of the house
Parting for a while from her
She would tremble like a liana assailed by cold wind;
She's like *Tillai*, the Lord of which is ever-free;
With a stranger, this day,
She left for the desert, ill-suited to her.
Did you by any chance behold her? (239)

Line 1:

cf. Desert shall rejoice and blossom.

- Isa, 35, 1.

Line 2:

cf. புலிப்பற் கோத்த புலம்பு மணித்தாலி

-அகநானூறு, 7- 181.

47. Getting Cross with the Pigeon

The nurse speaks:

He, of yore, received on His hair the flood;
He shares in His form the Princess of *Himavant;*
I am a sinner like them that hail Him not.
When she trod on the cruel desert with a lone stranger,
Having for sole aid and guide, his beauteous words,
O pretty pigeon, you didn't choose to tell her
That it did not become her at all.
Well . . . May you flourish! (240)

The nurse is wroth with the pigeon as it failed to dissuade the heroine from trekking any further. Even Jesus was angry with the fig tree which did not yield him fruit when he was hungry.

48. Grieved by the Indifference of *Kuravu*

The nurse speaks:

Oh great *Kuravu*, bright is the beauty of your leaves;
Your dolls -- the flowers --, are lulled to sleep
By the rustling wings of bees;
Thus do you flourish with your dolls.
My daughter, verily a doll, resembles *Puliyur*
The Lord of which rides a galloping bull.
Having eyed her tread the flaming desert
Toddling and tottering,
You did nothing to comfort her; neither would you
Ope your lips to tell me aught about her. (241)

குரவு : A shrub usually found in barren lands; Webere corymbosa. If Kuravu is the same as Kuravam, then it is the common bottle flower (Atlantea missionis).

cf. (i) குரவம் பாவை முருகமர் சோலைக் குற்றாலம்
-திருஞானசம்பந்தர், 1,99:9.

(ii) குரவம் பயந்த செய்யாப் பாவை
-ஐங்குறுநூறு, 344

(iii) தான்தாயாக் கோங்கம் தளர்ந்து முலை கொடுப்ப
ஈன்றாய் நீ பாவை இருங்குரவே.
-திணைமாலை நூற்றைம்பது, 65.

குழை : Also means ear-ring.

The flower of Kuravu is also called 'Pavai' (doll).

49. Enquiring Holy Men

The nurse speaks:

Your *sutthis* are full of holy ashes;
You are decked with bones;
You wield the weapon, *kattanga;*
Your hair is all matted;
Your bodies are smeared with holy ashes;
Did you behold a girl
With proud and swelling breasts
-- Swelling in joy like the devotees
Of the Lord of *Puliyur Ambalam* --,
Follow a great one, walking behind him? (242)

The nurse questions holy friars. These are Ma-vritas.

Sutthi (சுத்தி) : A wallet, in shape like a shell, wrought of skull-bone. Holy ash is kept in this.

cf. சுத்தி தரித்துறையுஞ் சோதி

-திருஞானசம்பந்தர், 1-89:10.

Kattanga is mazhu. Mazhu is referred to as a trident or a heated iron-rod.

50. Enquiring the Brahmins

The nurse speaks:

You are holding bamboo tridents;
Deerskin covers the napes of your necks;
White sacred threads adorn you;
Your chanting of the *Vedas* as you pass
Is like the rumbling of thunder-clouds.
Did you chance to behold an antelope --
Very like the one that decks the hand
Of *Tillai Ambalam's* Lord whose matted hair
Sports the crescent and the flood --,
Coming from the opposite direction
Pass you in the desert with a noble lad
Pitied by the excruciating desert itself. (243)

Line 11:

cf. குன்றும் குழையும்; குளிர்காவும் ஏங்கும்

-திருலோக சீதாராம்.

51. Enquiring a Pair of Lovers Who Came that Way After Union

The nurse speaks:

I rejoiced thinking that they have returned
When I beheld you;
Did you happen on a noble pair like you?
The young man answers:
The Lord of *Puliyur* rules even me as His devotee;
In His impregnable hill, I met a lad, lion-like.
(The young man now addresses his beloved:)
O dear, you are a lamp that needs no trimming;
Can you describe the form referred to by Mother,
That stood beside him? (244)

This is one of the best poems of the Kovaiyar. The lover casts his looks on none but his beloved.

Compare Lakshmana's words to Rama:

"I do not know the jewel worn on the hair, or the
ear-pendants; but I know the anklets, because
I used to prostrate myself at her feet every day."

- Srimad Valmiki Ramayanam, Tr. N.Raghunathan,
Vol.II, p. 181.

Also cf. "அல்லையாண் டமைந்த மேனி
யழகனும் அவளும் துஞ்ச"

-கம்பன்

52. Speaking in Wonder

The nurse speaks:

She is like divine *Puliyur* the Lord of which
Is the God of beauteous Mount *Kailas.*
'Tis here the flawless pretty chit stood;
That is where the great hero of resolute valour
Thrust his hand into the mouth of a tiger
That had rushed forward to attack him;
With his spear, he had so downed the beast
That it roared aloud, as it sank to the earth. (245)

The nurse as she proceeds (following the footprints of the couple) eyes a slaughtered tiger and comes by indubitable proof of the hero's valour.

53. Describing the Harmony of the Pair

The beholders speak:

On the way that lay betwixt the hills, oh mother,
We beheld the pair answering your description;
His *Kazhal* whence flashed lightnings, and her anklets,
His dress of white silk and hers of red,
Blending, glowed in the harmony of a togetherness.
As their nature resembled a single form
We took it for that of *Puliyur's* Lord
Who is concorporate with His consort --
The Mother of all entia. Even thus He sports.
We were persuaded to adore intensely that beauty.
Oh 'twas a beatitude of beatitudes. (246)

cf. சிலம்பும் சிறுநுதலும் சில் குழலும்
பல்வளையும் ஒருபால் தோன்ற
அலங்கல் அம்திண்தோளும் மாடு எருத்தும்
ஒண்குழையும் ஒருபால் தோன்ற
விலங்கல் அரும் சுரத்து வேறு உருவின்
ஓர் உடம்பாய் வருவார்க் கண்டே
யலங்கல் அவிர்சடை எம் அண்ணல்
விளையாட்டு என்று அகன்றோம் பாவம்.

(A poem quoted by Nacchinarkkiniyar in his commentary to sutra 40 of Akatthinai Iyal, Tolkappiyam).

Kazhal : An anklet with a tiny bell worn by a hero.

cf. தோலும் துகிலும் குழையும் சுருள்தோடும்
பால்வெள்ளை நீறும் பசுஞ் சாந்தும் பைங்கிளியும்
சூலமும் தொக்க வளையும் உடைத் தொன்மைக்
கோலமே நோக்கிக் குளிர்ந்து ஊதாய் கோத்தும்பீ

-திருவாசகம்.

The Yugala Murti, the conjoined images of Radha and Krishna, is thus described by Sri Ramakrishna:

"*Therefore in the conjoined images of Radha and Krishna, Krishna's* eyes are fixed on Radha and Radha's on Krishna. Radha's complexion is golden, like lightning; Krishna wears yellow apparel. Krishna's complexion is blue, like a dark cloud; so Radha wears a blue dress; She has also decked herself with blue sapphires. Radha has tinkling anklets; so Krishna has them too. In other words, there is inner and outer harmony ..."

- The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, page 637.

54. Urging Her to Return

The beholders speak:

Long are her eyes that roll like carp;
She will with him that in this cruel desert
Smote and tore the musty tusker,
Swim the wilderness and reach the bourne of *Tillai*
Where the Lord that rules us, abides.
You may therefore return, oh mother. (247)

Kentai : Carp : Cyprinus firmbriatus.

Line 3:

Musty tusker : The original says it is Katama. This word may also refer to a wild beast.

55. Describing the Way of the World

The beholders speak:

Sandalwood sought by bees, pearls from the main
And conches white find their way to them that
  desire them.
(They are of no use to the source whence they sprang.)
The Lord wears on His crown the great flood, *Ganga*
  wide.
Women that speak sugary words
Sweet as *Siva's Chitrambalam*,
Can be seen to be like unto them. (248)

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cf. பலவுறு நறுஞ் சாந்தம் படுப்பவர்க் கல்லதை
மலையுளே பிறப்பினும்மலைக்கவைதா மென் செய்யும்?
நினையுங்கால் நும்மகள் நுமக்கும் ஆங் கனையளே

சீர்கெழு வெண்முத்தம் அணிபவர்க்கல்லதை
நீருளே பிறப்பினும் நீர்க்கவைதா மென்செய்யும்?
தேருங்கால் நும்மகள் நுமர்க்கும் ஆங் கனையளே.
....

எனவாங்கு,
இறந்த கற்பினாட் கெவ்வம் படரன்மின்
சிறந்தாளை வழிபடீஇச் சென்றனள்
அறந்தலை பிரியா வாறு மற்றதுவே.

-கலித்தொகை.

Line 7:

them : sandal, pearls and conches.

56. Words Addressed to the Sorrowing Foster-Mother

The beholders speak:

This venerable woman is indeed her foster-mother.
The Lord of *Tillai* redeems them that seek Him.
The two will reach His *Tillai's* fecund fields
In which a good many cup-shaped lotuses upsurging
Get torn by coconuts that fall smashing
From the tree struck by the *varal* fish
That hath swallowed the fishing-rod
With bait and all. (249)

Varal : A fish, Ophicephalus striatus.

From st. 192 to st. 249, Palai-th-Thinai.

XVII. THE HASTENING OF MARRIAGE

1. Urging Him to Wed Her, by Pointing Out the Excess of Misery

The Confidante speaks:

O chief of hill, where young female monkeys
Feast on sweet banana from the projecting bunch
And slumber care-free
In the cool shade of exuberant bunches!
Like them that sorrow who think not
Of the Lord of *Chitrambalam*
Whose killer-spear furrows the battle-field,
She, whose eyes are sharp as the spear, fresh from
  the smithy,
Doth grieve sore; is this the way you show her your
  grace? (250)

(Note: Section 17 should follow section 15.)

Perasiriyar says that எழுங்குலை means 'tender bunch' and செழுங்குலை 'ripe bunch'. If it were so, according to Sri. R.Viswanatha Iyer, the Saraswati Mahal Editor of the Tirukkovaiyar, the first line must begin with the term செழுங்குலை and the second எழுங்குலை

The reference to tender and ripe bunches is full of significance. Even the hero's hill, an inamimate thing, provides uninterrupted joy for monkeys, with its perennial supply of tender and ripe bunches of banana. So, should she not, his beloved, enjoy herself in a like felicity? Premarital fugitive pleasures should be converted into abiding joys.

cf. (i) 'கோழிலை வாழைக் கோண்மிகு பெருங்குலை
யூழுறு தீங்கனி யுண்ணுநர்த் தடுத்த
சாரற் பலவின் சுளையொ டூழ்படு
பாறை நெடுஞ்சுனை விளைந்தேற
லறியா துண்ட க்டுவன்

-அகநானூறு, 2.

(ii) புணர்நிலை வளகின் குளகமர்ந் துண்ட
புணர்மருப் பொழில் கொண்ட வரைபுரை செலவின்
வயங் கெழில் யானை

-கலித்தொகை, 43, 20-22,

2. Refusing to Wed Her on the Ground of Her Divinity

The hero speaks:

He is the Supreme One beyonding all;
Yet is He the fruit unto me, His slave.
The God of *Tillai* is beyond the ken of *Brahma* and
Vishnu
Extending as it were beyond earth and heaven.
Is her residence in this hill
The habitat of celestial nymphs
That dwell in His heaven?
Or, the dwelling places of huntresses
Fenced with the bones of tuskers? (251)

Line 2:

Fruit : Fruitful consequence; result; reward.

Lines 3-4:

cf. "Expanse of light; that everywhere through every world
O'er earth and heaven springs forth and spreads alone"

- The Tiruvachakam, Tr. G.U.Pope.

Lines 8-9:

cf. (i) மதமலை எலும்பு கொண்டு அங்காடி கட்டுவன

-அருணகிரிநாதர் .

(ii) மத்தவெண் களிற்றுக்கோட்டுவன் தொடர்வேலி கோலி

-பெரியபுராணம், கண்ணப்பர், 2

(iii) யானை வெண் மருப்பினால் இயற்றி ஆவது
கானவர் குரம்பை

-சீவகசிந்தாமணி, 1201.

3. Urging Him to Wed Her by Narrating Facts

The Confidante speaks:

Honey flooding from combs hit by sling-stones
Shot by little boys, runs as babbling stream
And washes our little huts away, here in this land
Which is our father's exclusive demesne.
Our kith and kin are all mountaineers;
Our mother is from the hunting tribe;
We keep watch over the huge fields in the Lord's hill
Whose grace is not to be had even by celestials. (252)

The suggestion of the confidante is that even as the honey flows and washes away the huts, the rumour of the clandestine love between the lovers, spreads into the village like a flooding stream. This idea lies concealed in the words (உள்ளூறு) .

4. Forbidding Nocturnal Visit by Pointing Out to its Hazards

The confidante speaks:

It is at night in the forests, many a lion
Seeks the haunts of tuskers, in quest of food --
  their flesh --;
If you brave the woods at night with no help
Save your beauteous javelin, oh dear one,
It is proof positive of your grace for us.
But your coming, so it appears,
Will be but continuous misery to us
As is suffered by them who hail not *Ambalam*
The Lord of which adorns Himself with serpents,
From the hood of each one of which blazes fire. (253)

Lines 1-5:

Love, it is said, laughs at perils. According to Otta-k-koothar, illicit love is even stronger and fiercer and braver than love that is licit.

கரண்ட கண்டத் தொளிக் கஞ்சிய மான்கருங் கங்குலிலே
திரண்ட வெள்ளத்திற் பிணமீது சென்றனள் சேர்ந்தவனை
அரண்ட வின்பங் கொடுமீளக் கராப்பற் றவங் கொளுசால்
குரண்ட கன்னத்தி லுதைத்தனள் காணங் குலோத்துங்கனே

5. Forbidding the Visit by Day, Pointing Out to the Blame

The confidante speaks:

O chief of great sky-piercing mountain,
In whose hill, the cow-elephant breaking a tree
Extends it to the trunk of the grieving mate
To rescue him from the quagmire into which he
has fallen,
And trumpets aloud.
If you mean to grace us with your diurnal visit
It will expose us and also involve us in great stigma;
We'll grieve like them that hail not *Chitrambalam*
The bright Lord of which is concorporate with His
Consort
Whose gait is like that of the pen's. (254)

The suggestion *(உள்ளுறை)* is, that the tusker deviated from the right path and was involved in trouble. This is a lesson for the hero. He must cease premarital union and must soon get married.

Note: The word அளற்றிலே of Pazhaiya Urai is changed into அளவிலே by Sri.R. Viswanatha Iyer and this is followed by the editor of Kasi Mutt Publication. We think, the old commentator should have written அளற்றிலே referred to by Perasiriyar as அசும்பு which means quagmire.

6. Words of Beseeching

The confidante speaks:

I hail your feet and with folded hands beseech you.
Do not brave the night for her sake who droops
Like a peafowl and whose eyes rain tears;
'Tis at frightful night the sunken-eyed elephants
Scared of lions and *yalis*,
Herd together and would not even stir.
Fear the night, like them that feel scared
As they would not hail *Puliyur*
The Lord of which wears a garland of eyeless
skulls (255)

Line 5:

Yali : "A mythological lion-faced animal with an elephantine proboscis and tusks; a common architectural motif in Hindu Temples." SHAKTI AND OTHER POEMS, Tr. K.G. Seshadri, Notes, page 3. P.N. Appuswami coined a portmanteau-word, namely, leophant, to familiarise us with this mythic animal.

The 'ullurai' is that lions and yalis are 'slanderous tongues' that can smite and shatter the elephantine strength of the hero.

7. Informing Him of Mother's Knowledge

The confidante speaks:

You are resplendent like a peafowl at rainy season;
The Lord's ankleted feet fragrant extend beyond
all things
And even celestials cannot aspire to eye them.
He is fire-hued and His matted hair is dangling
low.
In his *Tillai's* littoral garden, fecund and beauteous,
A superb chariot decked with bells, driven by the hero
Should have alighted there last midnight;
Thus did our mother guess;
With her eyes turned reddish, she stared at me. (256)

This stanza is addressed to the heroine. She is told that her mother has come to know of her secret trysting. The eyes of the mother turned reddish, indicating but a fraction of her ire.

8. Urging Him to Wed Her Pointing Out to the Married Felicity of the Monkeys

The confidante speaks:

The Lord sports on His lofty crown divine,
Ganga -- the river that courses in the star-studded
heavens
And His body shares the Mother of all entia.
She who wears streaked bangles, is like
His *Tillai* city great, whose walls pierce the sky;
Ha, she beheld in the grove
The tops of whose trees sway in the sky,
A male monkey feeding his mate
With shapely mangoes soaked in honey;
She also witnessed the delight they felt. (257)

This stanza is addressed to the hero.

Lines 1 and 2 can also be rendered thus:

"The Lord sports on His lofty and beauteous crown
Lady Ganga -- the river rich in fishes"

Lines 4-5:

She .... is like His Tillai:

cf. ஞாலங் கைக் கொடை ரகுநாயகன் செம்பி நாடனையீர்!
-அமிர்தகவிராயர், ஒருதுறைக் கோவை, 2.

Lines 6-9:

cf. எறிமாவின் கனியும் பல வின்னிருஞ் சுளைகளும்
கீறி நாளும் முசுக்கிளை யொடுண்டு உகளும் கேதாரமே
-திருஞானசம்பந்தர், 2, 114:6.

9. Speaking of Her Sleepless Plight Owing to Severe Surveillance

The Lord wears *konrai* rich in honey and fragrance;
He dances in *Tillai* girt with water held by dykes
That run round the glorious city.
As young city-guards armed with red javelins
Beat their drums in their nocturnal rounds
The javelin-eyes bright and blood-shot
Of the bangled beauty of ever-swelling breasts
Would not close in slumber but grieve sore. (258)

The words of this stanza are not spoken by any.

Perasiriyar says :

"இஃது இன்னார் கூற்று என்னாது துறை கூறிய கருத்து"

10. Forbidding Tryst by Night as if Consenting to Tryst by Day

The confidante speaks:

Like the sins of those who hail not in love
The feet of the Lord of *Tillai Ambalam*
Which are not thought of by the evil ones,
The interminable night grows more and more murky;
What though the clouds rumble and lightnings flash,
Shower there is none from the sky.
These so cruelly gather about that their advent
Makes me feel that a spear thrust into a wound
Is but a flower;
Is there no medicine for this, in your hill? (259)

Line 4:

cf. "Wished morn delays"

- Paradise Lost, 1, 208.

Lines 7-8:

A spear thrust into a wound is to be regarded as a mere flower in the context.

Line 9:

The suggestion is that marriage alone is the proper remedy.

11. Forbidding Trysting by Day as if Consenting to Trysting by Night

The confidante speaks:

As it ceased to rain, seeking its advent
The foresters offer dinsome sacrifices
To the gods that abide in the hill;
O Lord of the realm of such cool hill!
  Like them that suffer as they think not
  On *Chitrambalam* of the Lord
  Whose body is like a rich hill of coral hue,
  She whose waist is cinctured with a zone,
  Will suffer by scandal
  If you grace her with your tryst by day. (260)

The suggestion is that as the mountaineers failed to hail their deity in time, rains failed, and so are they constrained to make amends out of time.

The hero's action is similar to this. He has failed to wed her in time. His present efforts are therefore like unto those of the hill-dwellers.

12. Forbidding His Coming by Night or Day

The confidante speaks:

The Lord sports a whirling flood on His crown
And holds me by His grace in bonded service.
Her eyes match those of the deer in the hand
Of the Lord of *Chitrambalam;*
Soft and dense are her curly locks.
Sir, if you come by day, it will involve her in blame;
If you come by night, it will be of no avail. (261)

Lines 1-2:

Even as the Lord broke the tumult and rush of the maddening flood and wore it serene on His head, He stilled the tempest of my mind and fixed me in His grace.

13. Urging Him to Wed Her Affirming that Time is Opportune

The confidante speaks:

O chief of great hill,
Where young female monkeys lie in swoon
Having drunk in abundance, honey
Flooding from jack-fruit which have fallen down
On the banana-groves, dense and dark!
The moon is midst a lustrous *mandala;*
In this hill of the Lord of *Ambalam*
Teeming young *venkai* trees are in efflorescence
And their flowers look a wreath of gold-chain.
What can truly beset you? (262)

Note: Wedding is normally celebrated during the season when venkai blooms, or when a lustrous circle is formed around the moon.

cf. *வேங்கையு மொள் ளிணர் விரிந்தன;*
நெடுவெண் டிங்களு மூர்கொண் டன்றே

-அகநானூறு, 2: 16-17.

14. Urging Her to Inform Him of Her Plight

The confidante speaks:

The Lord dances at *Chitrambalam*,
Girt with sweet mango-groves,
To our delight as the celestials hail Him.
But we grieve like them that hail Him not;
Though your girdle of majestic beauty slips down
He but stands unmoved.
If even after witnessing our exceeding misery
He cannot realise its gravity
Of what avail will be my words to him? (263)

This stanza is addressed to the heroine. The lack of celerity on the part of the hero to wed her is condemned by the confidante.

15. Speaking After Contemplating a Visit to Him

The heroine speaks:

O damsel lovely as the peafowl at rainy season!
If he be pleased to ask me, why I came
Treading the stony path betwixt the hills
Where the she-elephant thrusts herself
Between the killer-lion and her tusker,
And why I suffer like them
That hail not the Lord of *Chitrambalam*,
It will not be hard for me to brave the dark night
When bears seeking food lay waste ant-hills.
(Alas, he would not however query me thus). (264)

Line 4:

him : the male-elephant.

Line 8:

cf. (i) பரல்வெங் கானத்துக் கோள்வல் உளியமும்
கொடும் புற்று அகழா

-சிலப்பதிகாரம்.

(ii) பெருங்கை எண்கினம் குரும்பிதேரும் புற்றுடைச்
சுவர புதலிவர் பொதியில்

-அகநானூறு, 307.

(iii) கவிதலை எண்கின் பருஉமயிர் ஏற்றை இரைதேர்
வேட்கையின் இரவிற் போகி

-நற்றிணை, 325.

16. Urging Him to Wed Her Before Her Bright Hue Fades Away

The confidante speaks:

O chief of the realm of the renowned hill
Where women among hill-dwellers liberally exchange
Pearls, gathered from tusks of elephants, for toddy!
Our Lord hath spared His matted hair, great and
immense
For Lady *Ganga* -- the wide river of recurring billows;
This girl of *Tillai* is like a dark, delightful, comely
peafowl;
Wherefore should she suffer loss of lustre? (265)

This stanza is addressed to the hero.

Like the huntresses who parted with precious pearls to secure mere toddy, the lady-love had forsaken the watch of her brothers to give the hero premarital joy of union. No wonder he failed to assess her worth.

XVIII. PARTING TO EARN MONEY FOR THE WEDDING

1. Declaring the Bride Price

The confidante speaks:

Your request which is proper, your abundant learning,
Your way of life, your lineage,
Your conduct embedded in the wisdom of your forbears
The great justness of your honourable cause:
Though these support your proposal,
It must however be affirmed, in truth,
That all the seven worlds of the generous Lord
  of *Tillai*
Who bent a hill into a bow and wields it,
Cannot amount to the price of her whose forehead
  is bow-like. (266)

As the Lord who is truly unattainable accepts a pious and contrite soul, the heroine who is unattainable will also accept the hero.

2. Urging Him to Marry Her to Avert the Advent of Disaster

The confidante speaks:

The Lord that hath enslaved me wears long anklets;
The disaster that befalls them
That hail not His *Ambalam* may befall you.
Your gracious nocturnal visits will steep us in evil;
So, give our relations all that they demand
As price for the hand of her
Whose teeth are bright as pearls and whose long eyes
Are like two symmetrically slit slices of tender
mango.
Resolve to wed her. (267)

Lines 2-3:

Saivism firmly believes that one can put an end to one's cycle of birth and death by hailing Tillai Ambalam. It therefore follows that if one does not hail it, one will get born, again and again. In short, according to Perasiriyar, pregnancy is the result of failure to adore Ambalam. The disaster spoken to in line 2 is pregnancy. In other words, the confidante is afraid that the nocturnal visits of the hero will cause premarital pregnancy which is to be avoided at all costs.

3. Tell Her that I Go Forth Seeking Fortune for Her Wedding

The hero speaks:

O woman whose waist is lightning-like,
I now fare forth to cross hills and the desert beyond,
To secure the wealth demanded by her kin;
This done, I will come back to you.
O mellifluent one, may you now go to the golden one,
Like unto *Idaimarutu, Ekampam* and *Sri Vanjiyam*
Where abides the King of *Tillai Ambalam.*
May you console her with such words
As will prevent her from wilting. (268)

Line 6:

இடை மருது அதனில் ஈண்ட இருந்து
படிமப் பாதம் வைத்த அப்பரிசும்
ஏகம்பத்தில் இயல்பாய் இருந்து
பாகம் பெண்ணோடு ஆயின பரிசும்
திருவாஞ்சியத்தில் சீர்பெற இருந்து
மருஆர் குழலியொடு மகிழ்ந்த வண்ணமும்

-திருவாசகம், 2, 75-80.

4. Urging Him that He Should Himself Inform Her

The confidante speaks:

O peerless patron, non-pareil is the Lord;
She of His *Puliyur* is like a parakeet
And has a voice like that of *yazh*;
Even when you are with her during night,
Thinking of your absence during daytime
She whose eyes are beauteous with thin red lines,
Thinks that she but lives dead;
So, you yourself should tell her at the propitious
  time
Of your parting by assuring her
That you but part from her for a minute only. (269)

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cf. "செல்லாமை யுண்டேல் எனக்குரை மற்றுநின்
வல்லரவு வாழ்வார்க் குரை" -குறள், 1151.

5. The Departure Without an Adieu

The hero speaks:

The Lord of *Puliyur* smote the sun blind
And caused him to assume a low birth.
How can I take leave of her whose curly locks
Are dark like the hearts of those that hail Him
not?
If I stroke her softly, she'll feel bewildered;
If I speak to her sweet words, she'll inly tremble;
If I boldly declare my intent, she'll not understand;
She'll only be thrown into utter confusion;
I cannot apprise her of my parting by any means. (270)

Lines 1-2:

cf. (i) விண்ணிற் பகனார் தாந்துரக்கு மெல்லா விருளு மீண்டுதங்
கண்ணிற் புகுந்த கதை

-தக்கயாகப் பரணி, 45.

(ii) பகற்சுடரிற் பகற்கிருகட் பரப்பிருளைப் படுத்தே

-தக்கயாகப் பரணி, 490.

(iii) உண்ணைப் புகுந்த பகன் ஒளித்து ஓடாமே
கண்ணைப் பறித்தவா றுந்தீபற.

-திருவாசகம், 14:12.

Line 5:

The beloved who is shrewd, is always scared of excessive blandishment resorted to, by the lover.

cf. முள்ளூறழ் முளையெயிற் றமிழ்தூறுந் தீநீரைக்
கள்ளினு மகிழ்செயு மெனவுரைத்தும் அமையாரென்
ஒள்ளிழை திருத்துவர் காதலர் மற்றவர்
உள்ளுவ தெவன்கொலறியே னென்னும்

-கலித்தொகை.

Line 9:

cf. (i) சொல்லா தகறல் வல்லுவோரே

-குறுந்தொகை, 79.

(ii) செப்பினஞ் செலினே செலவரிதாகும்

-குறுந்தொகை, 207.

6. His Parting Apprised

The confidante speaks:

Oh goodly damsel, what am I to say
Of that which has befallen us?
To secure all the wealth demanded by our kin,
Our goodly hero has this day fared forth
On the fiery wilderness betaken by them
That hail not munificent *Tillai*, whose Lord
Ever-adored by the celestials,
Is flame-hued and is decked with heroic *kazhal*. (271)

"All life" says Havelock Ellis "is a building up and a breaking down, a taking in and a giving out, a perpetually anabolic and katabolic rhythm. To live rightly we must imitate both the luxury of Nature and her austerity." Love-life gets chastened by parting. Gibran says: "Let there be spaces in your togetherness." It is these "spaces" which strengthen togetherness. 'Parting' is therefore one of the perennial themes of literature.

7. The Heart Addressed

The heroine speaks:

The Lord's throat adorned by devoured poison
Is like a blue sapphire; He is the Ancient One
Who is both medicine and nectar to celestials;
Our patron who doth always hail *Tillai*,
Is proceeding on the reformatory way;
Should you, oh foolish heart,
Think that this righteous way will damn us
What then is there to sustain our life? (272)

Line 3:

Medicine and nectar : The former cures and the latter confers immortality.

8. Grieving with the Mind that Grieves Her

The heroine speaks:

The Lord is hailed by him who, of yore,
Wed the fair-armed *Nappinnai;*
The consort of beauteous *Nappinnai;*
The Lord's beauteous feet shame the ruddy gold;
In the garden that girds His *Tillai*
He had union with me in a place
Where black *punnai* bloomed with golden flowers
And where the sands were like pearls.
My heart went after his chariot
As he left me, after union.
What is it that it does here, this day? (273)

Line 2:

cf. (i) *பின்னை நம்பும் புயத்தான் நெடுமால்*

-சுந்தரர், 63-7.

(ii) பெய் வளைக்கை நப்பின்னை

-சிலப்பதிகாரம்.

Line 10:

The heart that went after the lover has come back to tease the beloved.

9. Consoling Her Witnessing Her Sorrow

The confidante speaks:

Dear one whose words are sweet as honey,
He is the Lord of the hill on whose crest clouds rest;
He wouldn't have gone at all.
The hunters in his hill draw their arrows upto their ear
But shoot not the darts as they behold their target --
  the deer
Whose eyes are very like those of their women.
O beauty of bright forehead, do not vex yourself
Like them that hail not the King of fecund *Tillai*.(274)

Lines 1-7:

The import of these lines is as follows:

The killer-hunters of his hill are full of love for their women; their chieftain will, a fortiori, be full of loving kindness for his beloved.

cf. (i) தொடுத்த வாளியர் துணைபுணர் கானவர்
இடுக்கண் செயயா தியங்குநர்

-மலைபடுகடாம், *17-18*.

(ii) எய்யத் தொடுத்தோன் குறத்தி நோக்கு ஏற்றதெனக்
கையிற் கணை களைந்து

-திரு ஈங்கோய், *12*.

10. Consoling Her in Her Own Light

The confidante speaks:

If on thinking of the garden full of honied blooms
Where you first met him,
The oath of non-parting that he swore,
The love that began to swell in course of time,
His sudden parting and travel on cruel desert
And the difficulty of his quest of wealth,
You choose to grieve, oh bejewelled!
Strangers may notice in you, oh flowery doll,
A grievous change like that which afflicts them
That hail not *Ambalam* whose Lord is triple-eyed. (275)

The message of the confidante to the heroine is that she should endure in silence the brief separation and not feel afflicted. Otherwise she might unwittingly debunk herself to hostile eyes.

The above stanza can be rendered literally thus:

"If you think on the garden full of honied blooms:
His oath, love, union, sudden parting to travel
On the inexorable wilderness and the rarity
Of the riches sought after by him,
And grieve, oh bejewelled damsel,
Strangers assailed by suspicion, will think thus:
"How is it that this flowery doll suffers a change
Like unto that which afflicts them
That hail not the triple-eyed Lord's Tillai?"

11. Grieving Despite Consolation

The heroine speaks:

The nature of him who is the chief of hill
Richly endowed with large gardens, where female monkeys young
Play with the unprotected eggs of peahen
As though they were mere balls,
May suit well the blessed ones who survive the pain of parting
With nothing to support them; these are
Like the throng that hail not *Ambalam* in the south
The dancer of which is decked with
Bunches of fragrant *konrai* flowers. (276)

The act of the hero who plays with the emotions of the lady-love, is like that of the female monkeys, which, insensible to the peahen's pain, play with its eggs as though they were balls.

cf. *கானமஞ்ஞை யறையின் முட்டை வெயிலாடு*
முசுவின் குருளை யுருட்டும்

-*குறுந்தொகை, 38.*

12. Assuaging Her Misery, Referring to His Truthfulness

The confidante speaks:

The Lord adorns Himself with mighty bones;
He bade me serve His puissant feet;
If you deem the words of the littoral chief
Whose realm in *Tillai* limits is girt with sea,
To be false,
O damsel of curly locks, bright with gold bangles!
You can never behold even a particle of truth
In this wide wide world. (277)

Lines 1-2:

Mighty bones : Bones of Brahma and Vishnu. The Lord will not forsake even the base; He wears bones, beads and ashes, and holds me as His slave.

13. Lamenting Unconsoled

The heroine speaks:

O damsel of dark and luxuriant locks,
Notwithstanding the knowledge of the truth
Of the words spoken in the past by the prince,
My heart and my self are out of gear;
What is it that these have done?
My dear life too, like them that haven't adored *Tillai*
Where the Lord whose frame is wrought of gold,
  is enshrined,
Is well-nigh unbearable to me.
Is this by reason of my past evil deeds
Or due to the inclemency of the present times? (278)

நெஞ்சு நில்லாமை : The heart is assailed as it doubts the hero's love.

நிறை நில்லாமை : This plight is visibly unbearable.

14. Speaking of the Unseasonal Rain

The confidante speaks:

Oh white-bangled beauty!
Uproarious is the adoration of God by our kin
For the prosperity of black millet crops.
The Lord of great and grand compassion
Made even me His slave,
And in this hill of *Chitrambalam's* Lord.
Nimbi pour down by His fiat, out of season.
Deeming this to be rainy season
Kantals blossom thick in this, His hill. (279)

Lines 7-9:

cf. (i) தன்னில் பிரிவிலா எம் கோமான் அன்பர்க்கு
முன்னி, அவள், நமக்கு முன் சுரக்கும் இன்னருளே
என்னப் பொழியாய் மழை!

-திருவாசகம், 7-16.

(ii) மடவ மன்ற தடவுநிலைக் கொன்றை
கல்பிறங் கத்தஞ் சென்றோர் கூறிய
பருவம் வாரா அளவை நெரிதரக்
கொம்புசேர் கொடியிணர் ஊழ்த்த
வம்ப மரியைக் காரென மதித்தே

-குறுந்தொகை, 66.

15. Speaking of the Messenger's Arrival

The confidante speaks:

The Lord is a vanquisher of the three
(skyey) cities;
His is a silver mountain; He abides and dances in
Chitrambalam;
O woman, decked with rows of bangles,
(I behold a messenger here). Is he from him
Who befriended us thanks to His limitless grace
And then parted from us?
Or from strangers, come to add to our misery
Of parting which we have painfully survived? (280)

The beloved is worried beyond measure as the lover had not returned by the appointed time. To distract her, the confidante refers to the arrival of a messenger, perchance from the lover.

16. Anguish on Beholding Messengers

The heroine speaks:

Messengers from strangers come and go away;
Like them that are knit in love to Him
-- The peerless One that abides in holy *Puliyur*
My lover caused the thawing of my innards
And had union sweet with me many a time;
Then did he from me depart with my life.
What does his silence this day, import? (281)

The prayer of the heroine can be couched in the words of the Tiruvachakam, thus:

"கடையவனேனைக் கருணையினால் கலந்து, ஆண்டு
கொண்ட
விடையவனே, விட்டிடுதி கண்டாய்"

17. The Foster-Mother's Remark on Her Daughter's Emaciation

The nurse speaks:

Her bamboo-like shoulders are slimming;
Her complexion isn't bright; her eyes lack lustre;
She who is cinctured with a girdle wide
Is no longer her former self.
The Lord's divine form is of the hue of coral;
He is the God of gods and Lord of *Chitrambalam*.
Perhaps, my lady adorned with perfect jewels
Hath entered the realm ruled by His son. (282)

The suggestion is that the Lady-love is possessed.

Lines 1-4:

cf. "Upon those reseate lips a Stygian hue."

– William Wordsworth.

18. Divination Resorted To

The nurse speaks:

Her breasts which have turned sallow
Have ceased to be like dice wrought of wood:
Her speech is indistinct and lacks clarity;
She hasn't attained the age of discrimination;
I beseech you to divine this angel's ailment
Which is, oh mothers, like unto that of them
Who hail not heartily, *Chitrambalam*
The Lord of which is Siva whose trident
Smote the hostile *asuras* and pulled out their fat. (283)

Line 6:

Mothers : Female sooth-sayers.

19. Standing Bewildered

The confidante speaks:

The divineress will reveal all that in her mind,
Cause us suffer like them that did not cultivate
The Lord who abides at *Tillai* beginninglessly,
Will now openly proclaim words of blame and scandal
Which even strangers of fair locks didn't utter then
And annihilate clean our great modesty
Involving thus our great family in blemish. (284)

The confidante is assailed by an excruciating fear. Even though the clandestine love of the heroine is the talk of the town, it is as yet an unconfirmed rumour only. Women of fair locks who are strangers talk about it in hushed voice only. But, the divineress who can see through things will disastrously bring to light, all that is kept hid. The revelation in such context will be tantamount to annihilation of all the virtues of the heroine and her family.

20. The Soothsayer Divines

The divineress speaks:

He shares in His frame Her, whose voice is *Kuyil's*
own;
He is the Lord of *Chitrambalam;*
His nature true is indeed ineffable;
Behold here the Peacock of His valorous Son;
Eke should you behold the Bantam in His Banner;
This indeed is the Spear which smote puissant *Sooran;*
These apart, behold here in paddy spread
His very form in lucid manifestation. (285)

Perasiriyar offers a word of explanation in justification of the divination which may appear to be false. It is not false indeed. The soothsayer knows as a fact that the meeting of the lovers was divinely ordained. When there is divine sanction for the conduct of the lovers and when it tallies with the hoary Tamil tradition, she can speak about the grace of God and at the same time expose the conduct of the lovers in disguised hints. Who can fathom the ways of God whose nature is ineffable?

Lines 7-8:

cf. காரார் குழற் கொண்டைக் கட்டுவிச்சி கட்டேறி
சீரார் சுளகில் சிலநெல் பிடித்தெறியா
. . . .
தாரார் நறுமாலை கட்டுரைத்தாள்
நும்மகளை தீராநோய் செய்தான் என உரைத்தாள்

-திருமங்கையாழ்வார், சிறிய திருமடல்.

21. Calling Velan

The mother speaks:

> The Supreme One of beauteous *Tillai*
> With His foot crushed to death, Death
> That sought to take out the life of a boy devoted to Him;
> Into my SELF He entered and there abides in grace.
> She who is like His *Tiruvenkadu*
> Has caused us this plight.
> Bid *Velan* perform the spirited dance;
> May the young of a goat be sacrificed. (286)

When a person is possessed, Velan who is an exorcist is invited to dance and exorcise. A goat usually serves as the scapegoat on such occasions.

The following observations of Prof. P.Sundaram Pillai are apposite. "The officiating priest wears a double set of clothes, mutters mantras, and begins the ceremonies. He . . kills a bull (according to the annotator, it is only a goat,) and then mingling with its blood rice and a little turmeric powder, offers the morsel with sweetmeats of different preparations to Muruka ... In the hilly tracts of Travancore, such scenes are not at all rare, and the classes of people who officiate at these ceremonies are still called Velan the very term used in the text."

- The Ten Tamil Idylls.

பாலன் which literally means a male child, here has no reference to sex. By this word the lady-love is indicated.

Lines 5-6 :

Exorcism through Velan is the last thing a noble family will think of. However such a plight has been caused by the lady-love.

22. Afflicted by Misery

The heroine speaks:

If even after the exorcising dance
And the sacrifice of the goat
My sallowness should continue
What will be the talk of others?
If on the contrary, it does disappear
What will happen to our kinship with the Lord
Of *Ambalam* who was not to be apprehended
  by the two,
As one flew the sky and the other burrowed the
  earth?
Will I not grieve like them that hail not
  Ambalam? (287)

Lines 1-3:

cf. காராட்டு உதிரம் தூஉய் அன்னை களன் இழைத்து
நீராட்டி நீங்கென்றால் நீங்குமோ?

-முத்தொள்ளாயிரம்.

23. Decision to Avoid Frenzied Dance

The heroine speaks:

Even though I pine like them
That hail not the Lord of Tillai,
I cannot mention aught even to her,
Dear to me as mine own self;
Neither can I survive non-disclosure;
So, I who am dear to the lord
In whose ford abounds many a sand-dune,
Will perforce share my secret with her.
If those who are utter strangers to my ailment
That hath been caused by him
Who parted from me after union,
Can hope to cure me, a wonder sure it should be. (288)

Line 3:

Her : the confidante.

Lines 9-12:

If strangers can diagnose the heroine's ailment, that will involve her modesty in stigma.

24. Declaring Her Virtuous Love

The heroine speaks:

O dear one of dazzling ear-rings!
Pure am I like them that hail *Tillai*
The Lord of which parts not from my lips and heart.
I'll even swear if you aren't convinced;
May all others sneer at me;
May the whole town jeer at me;
May my mother in wrath leer at me;
May you also incensed, fleer at me.
I'll narrate what happened. (289)

தாயேன் : This very word is used by Kamban's Sita.

25. Poised in Virtue

The heroine speaks:

When we were playing in the sea-shore
Building a doll-house of sand,
Thither came a man among men and said:
'O girls whose bangles are bright with lines,
I am a guest unto your house of doll
And I'll partake of your food.'
It was then the main of *Puliyur's* Lord
Rose in high tides and rolled towards us
Who were in the beach, and we were about to be
drowned;
He of heroic *Kazhal* rescued my life
By lifting me up, his hand locked in mine.
This done, he left for the tenements
Where beauteous *kantal* trees flourish. (290)

In his proem to this poem, Perasiriyar says that as the hero arrived, the confidante chose to make herself scarce. Then, when waves rose up and was about to drown the heroine, he rushed to her rescue.

His hand locked in mine : This is pani-grahanam (marriage). The suggestion therefore is that their union had taken place then.

Whatever may be the happening, it is nought but natural righteousness. That righteous relationship should continue. This indeed is the wish and prayer of the lady-love.

26. Speaking to Resolve Her Doubt

The confidante speaks:

O damsel whose eyes beneath the curved brows
Are like the two symmetrical slices of tender mango
And broad like the spear's leaf!
He is the chief of ford rich in flowers;
He wears as blooms on his head the feet
Of the Dancer of ineffable *Tillai* extensive.
With faults is he charged which even our mother
  knows
As they have gained wide currency;
The whole world gossips about them.
Yet we cannot expose them, even if it were
To involve our family in blame.
Pray, tell me, how best can we conceal them? (291)

Lines 4-5:

cf. (i) அப்பூதி குஞ்சிப்பூவாய் நின்ற சேவடியாய்

-அப்பர்.

(ii) அடிச் சந்தம்.... என்முடிச சந்தமா மலராக்கும்

-திருக்கோவையார், 78.

(iii) தில்லையோன் அடிப்போது சென்னித் திகழுமவர்

-திருக்கோவையார், 181.

27. The Confidante Addresses Velan Preventing *Veri*, the Dance of Frenzy

The confidante speaks:

Those who are after liquor may imbibe it;
We do not mean to prevent them;
When we were carried away by the flood's current
Flowing from *Parankunru* of *Ambalam's* Lord,
He came and rescued us;
His strong shoulders alone are a balm to her
illness;
If you consider aught else to be the remedy,
O God, there is none to match your intelligence
In this world, right now. (292)

Lines 1-2:

Liquor flows freely at the place where exorcism takes place.

Line 8:

Intelligence : Here it means lack of intelligence. The confidante knows as a fact that Velan is only pot-valiant.

Line 9:

right now : The word in the original is ini which may be translated as henceforth or hereafter.

28. The Confidante's Disclosure to the Foster Mother

The confidante speaks:

The Lord of *Ambalam* hath granted me
His long ankleted feet divine
That I may this day inly rejoice.
In His cool *Kaiḷas* immense, when we were
Engaged in chasing away red-beaked parrots green
On the mountain slope,
Thither came a hero and subdued
The tusker that came running to us in fury. (293)

The suggestion is that the lady-love belongs to the hero.

"உற்றார்க்கு உரியர் பொற்றொடி மகளிர்"

29. Nurse's Disclosure to the Mother

The nurse speaks:

The King of *Tirucchitrambalam*
Is surrounded by hailing celestials
Who bow their heads low before Him.
How can we ever extol in full
This little seraph of His *Kailas*
Whence the flood cascades for ever?
Before even her milk-teeth twain would sprout
She is schooled in mature wisdom. (294)

Line 5:

The little seraph : The heroine. The word in the original is **செல்வி** (she who is endowed with wealth). Wealth in the context is chastity. As the heroine is already well-established in this virtue and is bent upon linking her life with the hero, she is hailed thus.

cf. (i) *உரைசால் பத்தினிக்கு உயர்ந்தோர் ஏத்தலும்*

-சிலப்பதிகாரம்.

(ii) *புகழ் அமைந்த கற்புடை மகளை மக்களே யன்றித் தேவரும் முனிவரும் முதலாயுள்ளோர் சென்றேத்தல் இயல்பு*

-அடியார்க்கு நல்லார்.

30. Announcing the Arrival of His Chariot

The confidante speaks:

The birds winging over the dark sea that girds *Tillai*
The Lord of which wears rich *konrai* flowers
Besought by honey-sucking bees, chirp in joy;
The tumultuous waves of the sea roar in joy;
The throngs of liberal poets shout in joy;
The murmurous bees innumerable hum in joy;
White *valampuri* conches resound in joy;
Thus does this day come a chariot, oh soft one. (295)

Perasiriyar says that the birds and the sea which went dumb at the hero's parting, remained silent and were unable to console the lady-love. They are now vociferously over-joyed at the hero's return.

Line 7:

Valampuri : A type of conch with clockwise spirals.

31. Speaking Joyously Hearkening to the Wedding Drum

The inmates speak:

The Lord hath mothered *Brahma* and *Vishnu*;
He has a beauteous eye in His forehead;
She is like *Tillai* girt by the sea;
The drum sounds the wedding
Of her whose swelling breasts fill her corsage;
Let every threshold be decked with
A pot of gold filled with water;
Let festoons inlaid with gems and pearls and gold
Be planted everywhere;
Let musical instruments resound in symphony. (296)

Joy is truly infectious. "Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay" -- a statement of Alexander Pope, written in mock-seriousness, is full of rich import. It is because, one touch of Nature makes the whole world kin.

32. Sorrowing by Reason of Doubt

The heroine speaks:

The Lord is an unstinting bestower of bliss
To His devotees -- whosoever they be,
And thus saves them from pain and joy
Inherent in the cycle of birth and death.
The Supreme One abides at *Tillai*
In the gardens of which bees buzz in delight.
The huge drum joyously resounds
From our beauteous town.
Is it for him that rescued us in His hill
From the ichorous tusker, or for some
one else? (297)

Lines 9-10:

Compare Sita's plight:

கோமுனி யுடன்வரும் கொண்டல் என்றபின்
தாமரைக் கண்ணினான் என்ற தன்மையால்
ஆம் அவனே கொல் என்று ஐய நீங்கிய பின்னரும்

சொல்லிய குறியினத் தோன்றலே அவன்
அல்லனேல் இறப்பன்

-கம்பன்.

33. Announcing the Display of Riches

The confidante speaks:

The Lord graced me -- the lowest of the low --,
With His side-long look, out of compassion,
That I may not adore the minor deities.
In *Kailas* vast of *Sankara* who abides in *Tillai* cool,
He that smote the fearful tusker that was about
  to kill us
Hath this day filled the entrance to our house
With endless treasure; go and behold. (298)

Lines 1-3:

cf. சென்றுநாம் சிறுதெய்வம் சேர்வோம் அல்லோம்
சிவபெருமான் திருவடியே சேரப்பெற்றோம்

-அப்பர்.

XIX. SPEAKING OF THE GREATNESS

1. The Wedding-drum

The confidante speaks:

O damsel whose girdle is great and bright,
He the King is the most ancient;
He the Lord-God dances at *Ambalam*;
Gone is my misery like that of those
Who are blessed with His grace;
For, he that smote the hill-like tusker
For our sake, in the mountain rich in honey,
Hath this day come to our home
And there loud resounds his drum;
Gone is *murukiyam*. (299)

Line 6:

He : The hero.

Line 10:

Two types of drums were in use in hoary Tamil Nadu. One was known as wedding-drum and the other death-drum. Murukiyam, the instrument of the exorcist, was like a death-drum to the heroine. It is now gone. What resounds is the wedding-drum.

2. Speaking Rejoiced

The confidante speaks:

The rare leaves presented to her by the chief of
hill
Till now when she is about to circumambulate
The pit of fire lit for her marriage
And behold *Aruntuti* to the left of sage *Vasishta,*
Are fadeless like those who have hailed *Tillai.*
The Lord inaccessible to *Brahma* and *Vishnu*
Has deigned to accept my praise as great;
He is for ever meditated by me as a medicine. (300)

Line 4:

Arundhati is spelt as Aruntuti here.

அருந்ததி : 1. Wife of the ascetic Vasishta.

: 2. A star in the Great Bear supposed to be the wife of Vasishta, a pattern of female chastity.

அருந்ததி காட்ட inf. To point out to the bride the star Arundhati, urging her to follow the example of the said star in chastity."

- Winslow's Dictionary.

Line 8:

Medicine : The remedy for the malady of birth and death.

3. Speaking of Domestic Adoration

The confidante speaks:

O Mother, our prince who hails munificent *Tillai*,
The throat of whose Lord is dark as nimbus,
Will not transgress the wish of her
Whose dark eyes dazzle with lustre.
They are oned with each other as precious life
  and body;
Like unto the harmony of the honey in lotus
And the fragrance in sandal tree
And their blending together
To manifest their greatness
He is established in her adoring chastity. (301)

The title to this poem runs thus: வழிபாடு கூறல்

வழிபாடு literally means adoration. The husband actually should adore the wife. Bharati says:

காதல் செயு மனைவியே சக்தி கண்டீர்;
கடவுள் நிலை அவளாலே எய்த வேண்டும்.

Line 1:

The confidante narrates to the foster-mother the harmony that prevails in the domestic life of the hero and the heroine, after their marriage. As the foster-mother of the heroine is the very mother of the confidante, she is addressed as mother.

Line 3:

cf. Let thy mouth speak and my life be spent.

- Sarojini Naidu.

Line 5:

This is the very simile used by Saiva Siddhanta to explicate advaitam.

Lines 7-8:

cf. தாமரைத் தண்தாது ஊதி மீமிசைச்
சாந்தின் தொடுத்த தீந்தேன் போல

-நற்றிணை.

4. Speaking of their Married Felicity

The nurse speaks:

The Lord's feet are decked with anklets bright
And devotees true throng about them.
In His hoary city of *Tillai*, her domestic weal
That I did witness, is like our own.
She indeed is like unto you;
He, of soft and strong shoulders which appear to be
Wrought of hardy clubs, is like your husband;
The maid that serves her is like me;
The neighbours of her whose locks are sought by bees
Are like our own neighbours. (302)

Line 5:

She : The heroine.

Line 6:

He : The hero.

Lines 6-7:

strong shoulders .... hardy clubs:

The shoulders of the hero are so sturdy and strong that they appear to be made of wood.

5. Speaking of His Great Love for Her

The nurse speaks:

The long beauteous matted strands of hair
Of the Lord are wound up as a crown;
She is like unto His *Tillai*.
Her husband would not adorn with jewels her waist
-- The waist like unto falsity that has no form --,
As it is likely to break under the weight of jewels;
Neither would he suffer her to step on mattress
Unless it be strewn with soft flowers;
He would not deck her beauteous locks with honied bloom
Lest bees should buzz about them;
Lo, he would not even allow her to wear the *tilaka*
On her forehead, deeming it to be a weary burden. (303)

Line 5:

cf. *பொய்யோ எனும் இடையாளுடன்*

-கம்பன்.

Lines 11-12:

cf. *திருநுதல் திலகமும் ஆற்றாள்*

-பெருங்கதை, 5:1-139.

Line 11:

Tilaka : Caste-mark worn on forehead.

6. Speaking of Her Great Chastity

The nurse speaks:

The Lord's ankleted feet are hailed by all the gods;
She is like unto His *Tillai's Chitrambalam;*
She would not adore any other God.
Though he is away on an errand
To subdue the foes and exact from them
The tributes that they refrained from paying,
Home would he -- the prince --, return
And not stay away.
Such is the nature of lofty ones pure
Who hail from great families;
They are like the pearls of the ocean. (304)

The wife ever adores the husband only. However she will adore the deity hailed by the husband. The wife never partakes of food without worshipping her husband. Hence the daily return of the husband to his home wherever he be.

cf. தெய்வம் தொழாஅள் கொழுநற் றொழுதெழுவாள்

-குறள்.

7. Speaking of the Fruit of Her Chastity

The nurse speaks:

The strong forted walls of *Tillai* are sculpturesque;
The Lord of *Chitrambalam* has matted strands
  of hair
That dazzle like auric plates.
She is like unto His *Poovanam;*
Her chastity exceeds that of *Aruntati*
Who shines as the northern star in the crepuscular sky;
This ichorous tusker that he rides may go to places;
Yet it'll return in time to its shed in his house. (305)

Line 4:

Poovanam : A city near Madurai, hymned in Saiva Tirumurai.

Line 5:

cf. அருந்ததிக்கும் எட்டாத கற்புடையாள்

-வில்லிப்புத்தூராழ்வார்.

8. Speaking of their Rapport

The nurse speaks:

Though he goes to the battle-front
To fight against the King's foes
The chariot of him who is a mighty lion,
Would but return to its shed
And not get stationed anywhere else.
The Lord hailed by King *Varaguna Pandyan*
Abides at *Chitrambalam;*
More ancient is He than all the gods.
She who is like unto His *Moovaloor,*
Would not also hail any other deity. (306)

Line 5:

It is said that Varaguna Pandyan flourished during the 9th century A.D. It is also believed that the reference contained in lines 213-214 of Potri-th-Thiru Akaval, Tiruvachakam, relates to this king. This king is again referred to in stanza 327 of this work.

Lines 8-9:

cf. *காண்டகைய தங்கணவரைக் கடவுளார் போல்*
வேண்டலுறு கற்பினர்தம் மெய்யுரையில் நிற்கும்
ஈண்டையுள தெய்வதமும் மாமுகிலும் என்றால்
ஆண்டகைமை யோர்களும் அவர்க்கு நிகரன்றே

-கந்தபுராணம், 2, 5:47.

9. Speaking of the Joy of their Union

The nurse speaks:

It is as if that a single precious life
Unable to solely survive the flood of bliss
Has come to course in a couple of bodies
To revel full in a sea of bliss;
Such is the felicity of their conjugal delight.
It is akin to the bliss of those who are graced
By the Lord's feet enshrined in *Ambalam*
And decked with resounding anklets
Whence flows unending bliss.
This flood of bliss knows neither decrease nor
surcease. (307)

Lines 1-4:

cf. (i) ஆங்கிருவர் ஆகத்துள் ஓர் உயிர் கண்டனம்

-திருக்கோவையார், 71.

(ii) ....ஆவி ஒன்று
இரண்டு உடம்பு

-சீவக சிந்தாமணி, 1017.

(iii) காளையும் கோதையும் ஓர் உயிர் ஆயினர்

-சீவக சிந்தாமணி, 1981.

(iv) குன்று கெழு நாடற்கும் கொடிச்சிக்கும்
ஒன்று போன் மன்னிய சென்று வாழ் உயிரே.

-தொல். களவியல், சூ. 114 மேற்கோள்.

XX. PARTING FOR THE SAKE OF LEARNING

1. Speaking of the Greatness of Learning

The confidante speaks:

O bejewelled, learning is like Mount *Meru*
Immeasurable and immeasurably good.
Those who have traversed its endless limits
Will grow immeasurably great
Like them that meditate upon
The ankleted feet of the Lord of *Ambalam*,
The peerless One immeasurable (308)

Line 7:

Immeasurable : That is, immeasurable by logic etc.

cf. செல்வி வளர்திருக் கோடீச்சுரேசர் செழுங்கிரி மேற்
சொல்விற லுற்ற அறமுதனான்குந் தொக வியற்றும்
பல்விதமான புகழ் நல்கும் வேந்தர் பரவச் செயும்
கல்வி யழகே யழகாம் எவருக்குங் காரிகையே

-கோடீச்சுரக்கோவை, 421

2. Hinting of the Parting

The confidante speaks:

O great lady of wealth!
The Lord wears a garland of skulls
(Of gods who are no more;)
He is the Great One of *Tillai.*
Knowing that learning confers benefits
Only to them that are to His feet devoted,
Your lord that had hugged your breasts
Is out to learn from the very learned;
He is to leave for the fiery forest cruel. (309)

Line 8:

In olden days saints and sages who were sylvan dwellers were the great preceptors.

3. Speaking, Noticing Her Bewilderment

The confidante speaks:

The Lord bent the great mountain into a bow;
He willingly abides at *Chitrambalam* in *Tillai*
Whose forted walls are paved with stones.
When I told her that her beloved is after
Works of poesy wrought with words,
Those words entered the ears of the one of soft
  locks
Like a piercing murderous javelin
And caused her such grief as is
Suffered by them who love not the Lord-King. (310)

The confidante thinks aloud.

Line 6:

The one of
soft locks : The heroine.

Line 8:

The javelin is described as a weapon shaped like a leaf at the top and is a sure killer.

cf. "To be tender-minded
Does not become a sword:"

- King Lear, 5, 3, 32.

4. Sorrowing for the Recanting of the Hero

The heroine speaks:

My lover is sure noble and liberal like *Tillai*
Where abides the Lord inseparable from His Consort;
He solemnly affirmed to us in the past that he
  would not
Part from me, as our lives were but one
And as parting could never by him be endured.
Now the promise of non-parting is become a lie;
The other two must be too on a par with this.
Henceforth what is there for me to say? (311)

Lines 6-7:

The hero's assurance to the heroine was threefold: "I would never part from you; if I ever part from you I would not survive separation; we both are animated by a single life." He has now broken the first of the assurances. Therefore the other two are deemed to be false.

XXI. PARTING FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROTECTING

1. Announcing the Parting

The confidante speaks:

O flowery liana!
Your long curly locks are decked with fragrant blooms;
Your eyes roll like the dark carp.
He is the most aged; He is the eternally young;
He is the most ancient; He is the newest;
He burnt the triple cities of the sky;
To protect the earth girt by wide seas,
By His fiat of grace, our hero contemplates
Parting from us. (312)

Lines 4-5:

cf. முன்னைப் பழம்பொருட்கும் முன்னைப் பழம்பொருளே
பின்னைப் புதுமைக்கும் பேர்த்துமப் பெற்றியனே

-திருவாசகம்.

2. Grieving When Informed of Parting

The heroine speaks:

Dear one whose curly locks dense
Are decked with honied flowers,
He did save us in the past from the wrath
Of the tusker with small eyes, long proboscis,
Hardy tusks, waving ears and face ruddy with anger.
Is parting become this day his thought
That we should suffer like them
That hail not *Ambalam*, whose Lord
Burnt away the God of Love by His fiery look. (313)

Line 9:

God of Love : He is described as holding a bow of sweet cane:

கரும்பு வில்லும் சுரும்பு நாணும் அரும்பு பாணமுமுடைய மன்மதன்

Lines 6 to 9 can be more literally rendered thus:

"Is this what he thinks this day
That we should suffer like them
That hail not Ambalam of the Lord
Whose eye involved in fire
The one whose bow was wrought of sugarcane?"

XXII. PARTING TO MEDIATE BETWEEN TWO RIVAL KINGS

1. Announcing Parting

The confidante speaks:

The Lord chose to rule me in His infinite mercy
And spared me of many a birth and death in future.
Even the flowers in the gardens that gird *Tillai*
Cannot excel the fragrance of your long hair
Of dense and curly locks.
Our hero has thought of leaving us
To mediate between two hostile kings engaged in war,
As none of them can be mollified by the other. (314)

According to Irayanar Kalaviyal, "Leaving for mediation of Princes" covers two topics, (viz) (1) announcement of parting and (2) mollification.

பிரிவு கூறல் வருத்தந் தணித்தல்
இருபகை தணித்தற்கு ஏகல் என்ப.

-கற்பியல், 35.

First, parting is announced. The heroine feels distressed. The confidante then plays the role fo the mollifier.

2. Attenuating Her Grief

The confidante speaks:

The Lord grants to His devotees beatitude
Superior to that of the celestials;
He destroys the foes with a dreadful trident.
You of fair forehead, are like unto His *Tillai;*
Also are you like a beauteous bird of the hill;
Like butter on fire or salt in water, melt not;
Cease your lonesome sorrow;
The beloved's parting isn't true. (315)

Line 5:

The beauteous bird is the peacock.

XXIII. PARTING TO HELP A KING

1. Informing Her of His Parting

The confidante speaks:

Dear one of soft looks, queenly and beauteous,
Our hero has left for the battle-front
Of Kings, whose crowns are wrought with skill
And are besides decked with flowers.
What'll this day, become of the foes' fort
That is to suffer like them that did not think
On the beauteous One of *Puliyur* whose ear-studs
Are graced by the beauty of His ears. (316)

Line 4:

The kings are so majestic that their majesty invests the flowers worn by them with beauty.

Line 8:

The ears of the Lord lend beauty to His ear-rings.

2. Troubled by the Nimbus of the Rainy Season

The heroine speaks:

Ever-abiding *Puliyur* bright is girt
With the water of the river *Ponni;*
 Will the huge cloud, having drunk
 Of the wide sea,
 Circling and flashing lightning,
 Appear before the martial camp of our hero
 Who has closed in on his enemies that suffer
 Like those that have not hailed the Lord
 Of *Puliyur* whose long matted hair
 Is decked with *Vanni* leaves? (317)

Line 2:

Ponni : The river Cauvery.

Line 9:

Vanni : The suma tree; Prosopis spicigera.

Lines 7-9:

The hero had fared forth to give battle to the foes of his king. He should at no cost be distracted. The rain-cloud with its appearance may remind him of his duty to his wife. As a rule, when a husband parts from his wife, he is expected to return home by or before the advent of rainy season. The heroine is therefore worried about the appearance of rain-cloud.

cf. "Suddenly
She sees the bloom of willows far and wide
And grieves for him she lent to fame and war."

- Wang Ch'ang-ling.

3. The Hero Sorrows Beholding the Sky

The hero speaks:

In this night when it is drizzling
The male stork enfolds with one of its wings
Its mate and the young ones, and suffers the cold
alone.
Bright is her forehead who is like
Ambalam where is enshrined
The Lord of the Gospels, inaccessible to *Vishnu*.
What can be my solace to her? (318)

---

cf. "Like a lover in the pangs of separation is the sky, with the gentle breeze that comes like sighs, and the evening tints, like sandal paste smeared on the breast, and the pallor of its clouds. The earth parched by the summer heat and now flooded with freshes, is like Sita, scorched by grief, shedding tears."

– Srimad Valmiki Ramayanam, Canto XXVIII, The Rains.

4. Grieved by the Advent of Winter

The heroine speaks:

Dew falls and people seek firesides;
Nimbi on high. look like tall and handsome like *Vishnu;*
They ascend hills whence they watch for parted lovers.
He has gone to help his friendly throng
That loves him and seeks his help.
Will the clouds fare forth to grieve him
That is graced by the King of *Tillai*
Girt with the groves of sweet-canes. (319)

Line 3:

They : Rain-clouds.

5. Speaking Grieved by the Season of Early Dew

The heroine speaks:

Even the birds of *Tillai* whose Lord is adorned
With shining snakes not reared in ant-hills,
Slumber in dense darkness enfolding with their
  wings
Their mates and hugging their fledgelings
Amidst their feathered race, in peace.
Dew falls unceasing, encircling me;
Could it be that my mother bore me
That I should, for ever, wilt and grieve? (320)

Line 2:

cf. புற்றில வாளரவன்

-திருக்கோவையார், 97.

Snakes are supposed to dwell in deserted ant-hills. The snakes which adorn Siva took birth in the sacrificial fire. They are not from ant-hills.

6. Grieved by the Season of Late Dew

The hero speaks:

The Lord bent a hill into a bow
And smote the triple cities of the sky.
He removed a head of *Brahma*
That was amidst *Putthelir.*
Dew that falls heavy and fills the world
Is not unbearable by her alone who is like *Tillai;*
For lone and lorn lovers, it is as though
The sky doth rain darts. (321)

Line 4:

Putthelir are 'supernals' according to J.P. Fabricius.

Lines 5-8:

The hero had parted from his beloved to give battle and rain arrows on his foes. Likewise the rainy season gives battle to the separated heroine and rains on her arrows.

7. Grieved by the Season of Spring

The heroine speaks:

The Consort that the Lord shares in His form is
  red-lipped
And Her sweet voice is like melodic *yazh;*
Like the hearts of those gormandisers
Who hail not His *Chitrambalam,*
Are the *kuyils,* dazzling in their dark hue.
They perch everywhere in the mango-grove
And peck at flowers, honey-laden.
Ha, hope there is none for my survival. (322)

The advent of spring is thus described in Silappatikaram.

செந்தா மரைவிரியத் தேமாங் கொழுந் தொழுக
மைந்தா ரசோக மடலவிழக் - கொந்தார்
இளவேனில் வந்ததா லென்னாங்கொ லின்று
வளவேனற் கண்ணி மனம்

Villi says ***மாறனை மகுடம் சூட்ட வந்தது வசந்தம்***

Line 1:

Red-lipped : The original refers to ***அம் தொண்டைக் கனிவாய்*** (lips like the fruit of tontai). Tontai, coccinia indica, is a climbing creeper, flourishing in hedges. Its fruit is ruddy and edible.

Aliter for line 7:

"And peck at blooms buzzed over by bees"

8. Informing Her of His Sure Return by Referring to the (Rainy) Season

The confidante speaks:

O beauty of fair locks exploring the melodic hum
Of bees that buzz over the blooms of rainy season,
Siva of *Puliyur* wears no jewels save serpents;
The cool clouds beauteous that float in the sky
Are like unto His throat, in hue.
So, the chariot of my lady's husband
Is to be sighted this day or on the morrow. (323)

Lines 6-7:

The hero is expected to return before the rains set in.

9. Saying that this isn't the Rainy Season

The confidante speaks:

To my -- His humble devotee's -- delight
While the Lord whose throat is nimbus-hued
Doth dance at *Chitrambalam*,
Many a *muzhavam* of shapely eyes
Sounded like drizzling clouds.
Kantal flowers deeming it to be thunderclap
Began to darken like your tresses
And blossom wide like serpent's hood,
Drawing to themselves honey-bees.
O glorious swan, this isn't the rainy season. (324)

Muzhavam : A percussion instrument, the precursor to modern mridanga. Its black patch resembles an eye.

Lines 5-7:

cf. (i) வண்டு டுப்பாய்ப் பாம்பாய் விரலாய் வளைமுறியாய்
வெண்குடையாந் தண்கோடல் வீந்து

-திணைமாலை நூற்றைம்பது, 119.

(ii) மலர்க் காந்தளங்குறி பையரா விரியும்

-திருஞானசம்பந்தர், 2, 53:7.

(iii) அரவின் அணங்குடை அருந்தலை பை விரிப்பவை
போல்
பல்துடுப் பெடுத்த அலங்கு குலைக் காந்தள்......

-அகநானூறு, 108.

10. Voicing Forth Contradiction

The heroine speaks:

He is like honey; His hue is that of fire;
His heroic anklet pervades all directions;
He is our King of *Chitrambalam;*
His shoulders extend in all directions;
His throat bears the hue of raincloud;
Resembling the hoods of snakes that serve
As His ear-pendants and waist-cord
The fragrant *kantals* burst forth;
Like the fire in His hand, glows truly
The fresh bloom of *tonri.*
Are these false? (325)

Kantals blossom during rainy season. And rainy season is the time when the parted lover should return home. When kantals blossomed, the confidante was distressed. She knew that it was the advent of the rainy season. Yet she would contend that kantals blossomed not on account of riany season but for a different reason. vide 324. The heroine is nobody's fool. She asserts that it is rainy season and in proof thereof, she refers to the blossoming of kantal and tonri flowers.

Tonri : Red glory-lily

11. Saying that His Chariot will be Coming

The confidante speaks:

The Lord's mount is dark *Mal*, the bull;
Growing dark like the throat of Him
Who is the wearer of a heroic anklet
And who is unknown to *Tirumal*,
The clouds spread in all the eight directions.
Oh goodly damsel of large javelin-sharp eyes
Which seem to fight with each other,
The chariot of your husband will soon
Be returning to our golden city
As peace hath been concluded between contending
kings. (326)

Line 3:

a heroic anklet : Anklets of this type are not made in pairs. A hero wears a single anklet only. This ornament is distinguished from other anklets by the tiny bell that dangles from it. For other details see Cirpa-ch-Cennul, (1978) Madras.

Lines 6-7:

The eyes of the heroine are like two sharp javelins, one threatening to clash with the other.

12. Errand Ended, the Hero Thinks of Her

The hero speaks:

The well-built city with all its fortification
Hath been gutted with fire;
King *Varaguna* hails *Chitrambalam* whose Lord
Sports the flood on his long, extensive, matted
  hair;
Revelling in joy his elephants appear inebriate.
With a carp, like unto that he inscribed on *Himavant*
An immense bow and ever-ruddy *Indragopa*
I behold before me a beauteous face this day. (327)

This stanza is addressed to the charioteer of the hero.

Line 6:

Carp : Her eyes.

Line 7:

An immense bow : Her brow.

Indragopa : Her lips.

Indragopa : A scarlet insect appearing after rain, the cochineal: தம்பலப் பூச்சி Coccinella.

There is a pun in the latter half of this poem. It means that the hero has received a letter *(திருமுகம்)* sealed with the royal insignia of fish and bow *(கயல், சிலை)* indicative of kingly wrath *(கோபம்)*.

The inscription of the carp-signum on Himavant is attributed to Varaguna, though it was done by his ancestor.

13. The Hero Thinking of Her Plight Speaks Feelingly

The hero speaks:

The days of the embodied existence of them
That hail *Siva's Chitrambalam*
Of polyphiloprogenitive splendour and wonder
Fly fast with ease.
Drive the chariot, oh charioteer, in like swiftness.
To her beauteous town fortified with lofty walls
Wrought with ruddy gold of sparkling lustre.
There in the street,
Domestic pigeons of soft and nimble gait
Slumber in pendent beds in eaves
And eat the grains scattered in the foreyards. (328)

The hero pictures mentally the gay life of birds vis a vis the sadness of his lonely wife. The felicity of birds is a universal theme.

cf. "This guest of summer
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
By his loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here: no jutty; frieze,
Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed, and procreant
cradle;
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed
The air is delicate."

\- Macbeth, 1, 6, 3-10.

14. Imploring the Clouds

The hero speaks:

"Drink this dreaded poison; our splendour is undone."
When thus the celestials wailed and beseeched Him,
He indeed was the remedy to their malady.
He is enshrined at beauteous *Ambalam;*
Like them that hail not His flower-feet
She wallows in misery, robbed of her beauty.
O ye clouds, rich with water!
Do not fare forth to her glorious town
Ere my chariot reaches it.
Should you reach earlier, then do not rumble. (329)

Line 1:

Tiru Somasundaranar interprets the first-line in a slightly different way. He says that the passage does not mean that the celestials implored the Lord to drink the poison. It only means that they merely cried that they were undone by the dreaded venom. We have rendered the passage as interpreted by Perasiriyar and not Somasundaranar whose argument sounds specious.

15. His Arrival Announced

The confidante speaks:

The Lord looks beauteous with His ear-rings of
  snakes;
O gentle lady with sapphire-blue hair!
You are like unto His *Tillai Chitrambalam;*
Cheer up and be resplendent.
With the tributes of vassals and the insignia of
  the defiant,
All loaded in the forepart of his mighty chariot,
To the resounding of leather-strapped heroic drum
And gambadoes of horses neighing loud in joy
He is arriving. (330)

Line 5:

Insignia of the defiant : The hero is one who can wring recognition from unwilling hands. He worsted the defiant and wrenched from them, their insignia. He would not have *picked up the insignia of kings who fled from* the battle-field, throwing away their insignia, as suggested by Somasundaranar.

16. Speaking of His Non-forgetting

The hero speaks:

Neither *Brahma* the four-faced,
Nor *Vishnu* the holder of conch,
Can ever Him comprehend.
You are like unto His *Tillai*.
Even during my days of martial encampment
Surrounded on all sides by the King's foes,
I did not forget her blue lily-eyes
Brimming with pearly teardrops;
Never for a moment was my bangled beauty,
My psittacine warbler sweet, was away from me. (331)

In the privacy of their bed-chamber, the beloved questions the hero, if he had forgotten her during his absence. The hero's answer is contained in this stanza.

XXIV. PARTING TO EARN GOLD

1. Narrating the Misery

The hero speaks:

When I just said that through gold, sages and kings
Come by what they seek, her eyes were tear-bedewed;
O woman, like unto the Supreme One's
Thirucchitrambalam,
When with tearful eyes she went into a swoon,
I sprinkled on her water pure and revived her;
Then when I questioned her about her sorrow
The while assuring her that I would never from
her part,
Deeming the duration of her swoon
To be the period of my parting,
She of forehead fair, rose up, paid obeisance to
me and said:
"Is this the day of your return after long
separation?" (332)

Lines 1-2:

Though the statement of the hero is general in nature, his shrewd wife divined in it, a lurking hint of his intended parting.

Thanks to gold, kings achieve what they seek in this life; sages what they seek in future life.

cf. (i) எல்லாம் பொருளிற் பிறந்து விடும்

-நான்மணிக் கடிகை, 5.

(ii) பொருளானா மெல்லாம்

-குறள், 101.

(iii) பொன் பொருட்டினால் யாவும் உண்டாம்

-கந்தபுராணம், 2,1,7.

Lines 4-11:

cf. (i) திரைகடல் ஓடித் திரவியம் தேடு என்று செப்பும் ஔவை
உரை பழுது அன்று எனச் சோர்ந்தாள் கழுக்குன்றத்தோர் மடமான்
அரை பனிநீர் சந்தனம் கொண்டு பாங்கியர் ஆற்றிய பின்
இரைகடல் போய்வர எத்தனை நாள் என்று எழுந்தனளே.

-தனிப்பாடல்.

(ii) பொன்னே எனுமுன் அவசமுற்று ஒல்லைப் புறந்தடவி
என்னே எனப்பின் விழித்து எங்குற்றது இத்தனை நாள்
கொன்னே யென்றாட்கு என்பொருட் பிரிவென்....

-கோடீச்சுரக் கோவை, 436.

Lines 7-9 -- not in the original --, are supplied to make the meaning clear.

2. Apprising the Parting of the Hero

The confidante speaks:

The Lord stood extending so as not to be apprehended by
The pair -- *Brahma* and *Vishnu*.
You are like unto His *Tillai Chitrambalam;*
O one of forehead fair whose coiling ringlets
Are dense and dark and long!
White are your teeth and lips rubicund;
The indigent know not of the joy of life here or hereafter;
So to come by wealth everlasting and limitless
Our hero is to tread the pathless wilderness wild. (333)

Line 6:

cf. (i) ஈதலும் துய்த்தலும் இல்லோர்க்கில்

-குறுந்தொகை, 63-1.

3. Lamenting, Unable to Contain Herself

The heroine speaks:

My companion is sure a cruel woman;
She knows that as my consort lives in my eyes
I do not paint them with collyrium, fearing
His absence from them though for the nonce;
She has the heart to tell me
That he is to tread the cruel way
In which they that hail not *Ambalam's* Lord abide;
She indeed is unsheathing a sword to cut a lily
Which will fall apart
Should but a small bright nail graze it. (334)

கொடியவள் means (1) she who is cruel and (2) she who is a liana.

Lines 2-5:

cf. "My lover doth ever in my eyes reside;
I paint them not, fearing his form to hide."

- The Kural, 1127.

Line 10:

nail : finger-nail.

4. Narrating Her Inability to Bear Separation

The confidante speaks:

When I told her, that you -- her husband
Are to wade through wilderness wild and forest
  fierce,
Like them that hail not the Dancer at *Tillai*
On the circling forted walls of which rest clouds,
Her breasts changed in hue and turned
Into gold praise-worthy;
Her flowery eyes showered pearls aplenty;
Oh prince decked with honied garlands
What is it that you are after, in the land
  far away? (335)

Breasts turning into gold : When the love is separated from the lover, her breasts lose their natural lustre and turn xanthous.

Pearls : Tear-drops.

The confidante says that when gold and pearls abound here, why should the hero seek them elsewhere.

5. Referring to the Transfer of Tinai (region)

The heroine speaks:

In the *Potiyil* hill of *Ambalam's* Lord
Whose ruddy, matted, curly hair sports the white
crescent,
In a flowery garden umbrageous
He who is sweet as my dear life, had union with
me;
He had clean forgot all his sweet words of grace;
Is it fair that my saviour should tread the wilderness
wild
In quest of wealth for my sake?
Ha, I am a sinner indeed! (336)

The tinai appropriate to parting is palai. The hero is however referred to as one in marutam. Marutam is adverted to, as the heroine means to indulge in love-quarrel.

6. Reporting His Fixity

The confidante speaks:

The First One dances, as *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Indra*
And other gods, thirty-three in number, hail Him.
The sinners that hail not the glory
Of *Siva's Tillai Ambalam* abide in hell.
Like unto that hell is the forest which blazes
With fire unnatural; our hero is bound for this.
O flowery liana, now, what are we to say? (337)

Line 2:

Twelve Adhityas, two Aswinis, eleven Rudras and eight Vasus are the thiry-three gods.

7. Reporting His Parting

The confidante speaks:

The Lord dances in fire at *Tillai Chitrambalam*
That the immense region of South may be rid of
  its flaws;
He placed His ankleted feet on my dog's head to
  sanctify me;
You are like unto His *Tiruppoovanam*,
Girt with golden walls of fortification
And dight with many a garden.
With his tuskers huge and strong,
O my dear gold, our prince did depart to come
  by wealth. (338)

Lines 1-2:

cf. தென்பால் உகந்தாடும் தில்லைச் சிற்றம்பலவன்

-திருவாசகம்.

According to Dr. V.S.Chengalvaraya Pillai, the southern region was perhaps involved in some sort of stigma, in the distant past. Stanza 243 of Naladiyar makes a condescending reference about the south when it says: "தென்னாட்டவரும் சுவர்க்கம் புகுதலால்" Perhaps, to set the flawed South straight, the Lord dances at Tillai.

8. Lamenting Over the Inclemency of the Night

The confidante speaks:

The four watches of the night seem as eternity;
They are indeed longer than the very yuga
That the triple-eyed Lord dissolves eventually
By resolving the five elements into their causal state.
It is after wading through the seven oceans
And traversing all the eight directions
The chariot of the fatigued sun should arrive;
It has but one wheel and his charioteer is without his two feet.
(Alas, when will the chariot come
And when'll this night end?) (339)

To the love in separation, the night always appears interminable.

cf. (i) "Must all the ages be unrolled
between the sunset and the dawn?"

- Nala Venpa, Tr. Maurice Langton.

(ii) "The long truculent night
Would not end, but lengthened out
Like a tail that knows no end"

- Gandharva Ganam, Tr. T.N.R.

(iii) "Wished morn delays"

- Paradise Lost, 1, 208.

Line 8:

The chariot of the sun which is drawn by seven steeds has but one wheel; its driver Aruna having been born much earlier than the time appointed, is endowed with a body from head to hip only.

9. Suffering, Thinking on His Ignoration

The heroine speaks:

In the past when he said he was to part,
I took it for a jest and ignored it;
My prince ignored me thinking that I would
Survive his separation somehow.
The twyfold ignoration now causes me grieve
Like them that are not endowed with the grace
Of the beauteous Lord of *Ambalam*,
The One who isn't easy of access to any one
And who smote the triple fire of exceeding beauty
Of *Daksha's* sacrifice. (340)

Lines 1-7:

cf. (i) *செல்லா ரவரென்றி யானிகழ்ந்தேன் சுரஞ்செல்லத் தன்கண்*
ஒல்லாள் அவளென்று அவர் இகழ்ந்தார் மற்றுவை யிரண்டும்.
கொல்லா ரயிற்படைக் கோனெடு மாறன் குளந்தை வென்ற
வில்லால் பகைபோல் எனதுள்ளம் தன்னை மெலிவிக்குமே.

-பாண்டிக்கோவை.

(ii) *செல்லார் அவர்என யான் இகழ்ந்தேனே*
ஒல்லாள் இவள்என ஒழிந்தனர்
நல்எழில் உண்கண் நலியும் என்நெஞ்சே

-தமிழ்நெறிவிளக்கம், மேற்கோள் பாடல்.

(iii) *செல்வார் அல்லர் என்றியானிகழ்ந் தனனே*
ஒல்வாள் அல்லள் என்று அவர் இகழ்ந்தனரே
ஆயிடை இரு பேராண்மை செய்த பூசல்
நல்லராக் கதுவி யாங்கென்
அல்ல னெஞ்ச மலமலக் குறுமே.

-குறுந்தொகை, 43.

10. The Projection of the Image of the Lady-Love

The hero speaks:

He is the Lord of *Chitrambalam*
Whose forted walls can be eyed from great distance;
He is the Peerless One that could devour poison
Churned out of the sea, as though it were food;
In all directions of the world by Him created
When I cast my looks, I but behold
The figure of her who is a flowery liana;
She has sparkling eyes like black carp;
Her lips are ruddy like luscious fruit;
She is loaded with jewels wrought of fresh gold;
Her breasts are shapely and symmetrical. (341)

Lines 5-7:

cf. (i) "Your phantom fills ev'ry spot my eyes behold".

- Bharati, Tr. T.N.R.

(ii) "I beheld nought but a myriad forms
Of the pretty Kuyil of the leafy grove:
It was here; it was there; it was ev'rywhere
In the world ... "

- Bharati, Tr. T.N.R.

Lines 5-11 can be rendered more literally thus:

"*In all the world created by Him*
In whatever direction I look at
I behold a flowery liana
Endowed with black carp,
Ruddy fruit with gold jewels
And a harmonious pair of breasts."

11. Grieving With the Heart

The hero speaks:

O heart, running fast in quest of heaps of gold,
Are you in hot pursuit of her who is endowed
With a lightning-waist and swan's gait,
And who is like unto the fecund city
Of beauteous *Tillai* hailed by the celestials?
Or, are you after the coveted gold?
But, you tarry here in this flaming forest wild;
What may then your true intent be? (342)

---

cf. குன்றே நெருங்குங் கொடுஞ்சுரத் தென்னையுங் கொண்டு வந்து
நின்றே வருந்துநெஞ் சேயஞ்சு வேனின் நிலையதற்கே.

-அம்பிகாபதிக்கோவை, 551.

12. Getting Cross with the Heart

The hero speaks:

I am void of that good quality which marks even
  a cur;
Yet, He made a devotee of me too;
Seldom is parting possible, though it be from even
  a devil,
Yet, oh heart, you made it easy for me to part
  from her
Who is the sweet articulator of words, few and
  rare,
And who is like unto the flame-hued of *Chitrambalam*;
Now you cause me abide here in the far-off place.
Your inclemency is indeed horrendous! (343)

Line 3:

cf. (i) *பேயோடாயினும் பிரிவொன்று இன்னாதென்பர்*

-சுந்தரர்.

(ii) *இன்னாதே பேயோடானும் பிரிவு*

-பழமொழி நானூறு, 126.

Line 8:

cf. *நன்றே, நெஞ்சே! நயந்த நின் துணிவே*

-குறுந்தொகை, 347.

13. Refusing to Follow His Heart

The hero speaks:

O heart, she is like unto *Tirucchitrambalam*
Of the Dancer of fire;
Should we leave her who is herself gold
Enthroned on lotus,
And fare forth in this flaming forest
We are done for.
Oh heart, do you truly aid my thriving
By making me leave her, a liana
Cinctured with a beauteous girdle? (344)

Lines 3-4:

The lady-love is described as Lakshmi. Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth. Who will forsake Lakshmi and go away in quest of wealth? It will be nothing but an exercise in stultification.

14. Getting Sadder Counting the Parted Days

The heroine speaks:

Sorrowing like them that hail not *Chitrambalam*
Of *Siva* who is adorned with a lucid river,
She whose words are lilting melody, doth ail.
Her large cool eyes shed tears; her hue fades;
As she counts the days of his long parting
By pressing her finger on the floor,
Her finger and floor waste and wear away. (345)

---

cf. My finger has worn away by marking (on the wall) the days he has been absent while my eyes have lost their lustre and begin to fail.

- The Kural, 1261.

15. Saddened by the Sight of Bulls and Cows Returning at Eve

The hero speaks:

Having battered the bright ant-hill
With their strong horns,
Victorious and deadly bulls with cows
Return to the village to the tinkling of their metallic bells
At eve, when the sky is incarnadine.
The Ancient One did reveal to me
The cumbrous futility of kith and kin;
He did grace me with His hoary ankleted feet;
She who is like unto His *Chitrambalam*, alas
Isn't strong enough to endure this sight. (346)

Line 3:

கிடையசை கிண்கிணியும்

-இரங்கற்பா, நீ.கந்தசாமிபிள்ளை.

Lines 5-6:

cf. உற்றாரை யான் வேண்டேன்

-திருவாசகம்.

16. Saddened by the Rainy Season

The hero speaks:

The sky is thick with louring clouds
Beyond which eyes cannot ken;
In places where hang flowers in bunches,
Peacocks will throng, unfold
Their countless feathers and dance;
Like the grace of *Tillai's* King acknown by all lives,
Is she whose words far excel the melody of music.
What may be her plight
Caused by me, the sinner? (347)

"Can the world buy such a jewel?" thinks the hero, and feels sorry for having parted from her.

17. Addressing the Cloud

The hero speaks:

The Lord dances in the crematory at dusk;
He abides at *Chitrambalam;*
O huge cloud, black like His throat,
Though you may overtake me here,
Reach not ahead of me to the mansion great
Where matrons old gather, strew fragrant flowers
And offer a holy sacrifice of paddy grain
To household deities, to relieve the distress of
  her
Whose bright forehead excels a bow. (348)

Lines 6-8:

cf. சிறுதினை மலரொடு விரைஇ, மறி அறுத்து, வெண்
பொரி சிதறி, தூவெள் அரிசி சில்பலிச் செய்து

-திருமுருகு·

18. Announcing the Arrival of Chariot

The confidante speaks:

At the time the cloud darkened to end
The glorious life beauteous of her who is statuesque,
By the grace of Him, the tint of whose throat
Excels the blue lily of *Ambalam*,
A chariot loaded with garnered wealth immense
On a sudden barged in.
Things come to pass, as ordained. (349)

Line 7:

cf. Che sara sara.

19. The Gathering of Youngsters to Welcome Him

The servants speak:

Her bright girdle began to slip down;
Her streaked bangles began to fall down;
Yet, before life would from her part,
Appeared the chariot of her lover.
Is there aught more puissant
Than Fate wrought by Him--
The Lord of *Ambalam* who shares in His form
His Consort whose voice is sweet as *yazh*? (350)

Line 6:

cf. ஊழிற் பெருவலி யாவுள?

-குறள்.

20. Speaking Inly Rejoiced

The hero speaks:

Her words are musical as those
Of the *kuyil* of *Puliyur*
The Lord of which rides a bull.
All the suffering I underwent in the desert
For ever burning with the sun's rays,
For the purpose of earning wealth
Parting from this antelope with a peafowl's mien,
Stands total annihilated as her soft breasts
Lie buried in my chest in this flowery bed
Wrought for slumber sweet. (351)

Line 10:

cf. *தாம்வீழ்வார் மென்தோள் துயிலின் இனிதுகொல்*
தாமரைக் கண்ணான் உலகு
-குறள். 1103.

XXV. PARTING CAUSED BY COURTESAN

1. The Talk of the Beholders

The beholders speak:

The Lord wears the serpent bright as His belt
And also as an ornament;
As the hero of His *Tillai* stepped into this street,
They that are beauteous like young peafowls,
To the tinkling of choice bangles that they wear,
Shooting arrows which are the looks of their flowery eyes
From their bows, their dark brows,
Him encircled, and those dames bright with glittering jewels
Besieged him instantaneously from all directions. (352)

Whatever argument is offered in justification of the conduct of the hero who went after the hetaira is considered to be specious and sham. This indeed is the modern view. Sankam literature, however, elaborately dwells on hetairism. The grand old patriarchal system. had arrogated to itself some none-too-ethical privileges and concessions which, people at large were prepared to tolerate. The first palpable outburst against harlotry erupted from the stylus of Tiruvalluvar. Yet in Kamathu-p-pal, he too had to accommodate this

topic. The flesh was, is and shall ever be, weak.

Line 1:

The serpent is both His vestment and adornment.

Lines 5-6:

cf." Her anklets sounding a martial strain,
Her eyes for lance and sword, beneath
The crescent banner of her brow
She rules her Kingdom. ."

- Nala Venpa, Tr. Maurice Langton.

2. Praising Her Forbearance

The confidante speaks:

He is the chief of town where sugarcanes flourish;
Eke is it rich in noisy waves of abundant waters.
When I hearkened to the news of his parting
from her
The very pupils of my eyes have become a burden
huge;
My life too is wasting and wilting.
She, the slender-waisted, of hoary *Puliyur*
Whose Lord wears *Konrai* blooms buzzed over
by bees,
Is amazingly calm, the lady of rare fortitude!
What can I, this day, say of her? (353)

Lines 6-9:

There is no outward manifestation of the condition of her heart, now broken to pieces.

3. Lamenting, Indulging in Generalities

The heroine speaks:

Like them, the ailing sinners that hail not *Tillai*
The Lord of which sports a flood in His crown
I ail, burn within and without,
Sigh and heave hot breaths.
With the soft bed for the sole companion
Are there other women with breasts like caskets,
Languishing with wasting life, like me? (354)

This address is made in the presence of the hero. As he has come back quitting the company of the play-girls, they must be languishing in his absence. The heroine appears to be distressed at this.

Magnanimity, thy name is woman!

Line 6:

Companion : Help; aid.

4. Lamenting on the Loss of a Dream

The heroine speaks:

O goodly woman, my lover came to my bed
And offered me his garlanded chest for my embrace;
I knew it not to be a dream
As I mistook it for wakeful state.
So, I moved apart, angry with him for his wrongs;
Then I woke up, the sinner that I am.
Like them that hail not *Tillai*, the ankleted feet
Of whose Lord are hailed by *Devas* and *Asuras*
alike,
I have lost the bliss of dream, too, alas! (355)

Contrast : *Wherewith shall I feast the dream which has brought* me my dear one's messenger.

\- The Kural, 1211.

5. Getting Cross with the Lamp

The heroine speaks:

I suffer like them who hail not with folded hands
The Lord of *Chitrambalam* at *Tillai*
Where blue lilies burgeon from every field.
Having drunk the oil, oh lamp, you burn
With lustre great and scatter murk away.
Even you did not tell me that I shouldn't have
Shown my lover, a visage as a facade of
false anger. (356)

Line 4:

Tell me : Tell me in my dream:

cf. The cruel one who would not favour me in my wakefulness, what right has he to torture me in my dreams? - Kural, 1217.

Lines 6 and 7 can also be rendered thus:

"Even you did not tell him that it was not
Proper for him who had union with me
To present a phantom-visage,
And then disappear."

6. Refusing Admission by Referring to Her Gift

The heroine speaks:

Whosoever they be, let them retain for themselves
The great garland wrought of lilies bright
And the golden shoulders twain of him.
The Lord bent His bow to destroy the forts of His
foes;
We have given away our king as an absolute gift
To them that dwell beyond the limits of *Tillai Ambalam*
And who wear a good many bangles bright. (357)

Line 5:

An absolute gift : உறாவரை: முற்றாட்டு

The gift is total, absolute and irrevocable. All the right, title and interest in the article gifted, is conveyed to the settlee.

Lines 6-7:

To them ..... bright : To the courtesans. They live without the city in its outskirts.

7. Love Quarrel in the Bed-Chamber

The heroine speaks:

He is the Father, the Ever-free and *Siva;*
You are of His beauteous *Tillai* wrought by His
glorious grace;
We the evil sinners haven't wrought in the past,
austerities;
Instead of our blaming us for our parvanimity
What boots it that we should accuse you?
We aren't versed in the love-feats of novel marvel
In which your jewelled beauties are experts.
Cease, and tug not at our girdle. (358)

This stanza is addressed to the hero who has come back.

Line 8:

cf. எம்மும் தொடாது லெங்கு லெம்மன்னே
-குறுந்தொகை, 191.

கலை means garment. It is also the shortened form of மேகலை which is a girdle.

8. The Speech of the Occupants of the House When 'Red Attire' was Despatched

The old matrons of her house speak:

The Lord of *Tillai* wears on His crown, as jewels
The serpent and the crescent, hostile to each other;
To the houses where throng courtesans
Whose waists sway like the hoods of serpents,
She of swelling breasts, her trusted friend, attired red,
In the sight of her bevy of old play-mates,
Doth fare forth, as she of wasting hips,
languisheth. (359)

In olden days, when the child-wife attained puberty, the news was conveyed to the husband who dwelt among bawds, in the following way. The confidante of the wife would be dressed in red and sent to the house where the husband abode. This was called "Sevvani Vidutthal."

பரத்தையிற் பிரிந்த கிழவோன் மனைவி
பூப்பின் புறப்பா டீராறு நாளும்
நீத்தகன் றுரைதல் அறத்தா றன்றே.

cf. *குங்குமம் பூசிநற் கோசிகங் கட்டிக் கொடிப்பவளத்*
தொங்க லணிந்துடன் வெட்சியுஞ் சூடியித் தோழிசெலும்
கொங்கலர் செந்தமிழ் கூருங் கரந்தையிற் கோமளூர்
பொங்கலர் சேர்த்திடப் பூமக ளாயினள் போன்மினிதே.

-கரந்தைக் கோவை, 382.

Line 5:

She of swelling breasts : The original refers to the breasts as having swelled and settled.

9. Feeling Sorry for Disclosure in Front of Others

The heroine speaks:

Before dames whose foreheads are like unto the
crescent
That appears on high at night
She is dressed in ruddy habiliments;
She whose locks are decked with *Kuravu* blooms
Is sent forth to proclaim my plight;
Alas my hero of *Tillai*, the Lord of which wears
Serpents on His matted strands of hair,
Has to be yielded to me by some woman,
And I am to secure him thus, even thus.
Have my womanly virtues come to this? (360)

Line 4: குராப் பயில் கூழை

-திருக்கோவையார், 362 •

Line 5:

Plight : Pubescence.

10. The Speech of the Watchmen Beholding the 'Red Attire'

Watchmen speak:

The Lord's frame is ruddy gold; He is ruby;
He abides at *Tirucchitrambalam;*
Our hero wears on his crown His roseate feet;
To apprise him of her pubescence
In the accepted way of the world,
To our wealthy mansion fares forth the belle
Clad in silk incarnadine inwoven with designs,
Decked with rubescent blooms fresh
And painted with sandal-paste rubicund
On her breasts, girt with a breast-band. (361)

Vayilar, according to the old commentary, are watchmen. The word also stands for Panar who acted as messengers. See notes for line 2 of stanza 260, The Oath of Draupadi, Bharati-Pancharatna Series No 4.

11. The Speech of the Watchmen, Beholding His Entry into the House

Watchmen speak:

Time was when he could not gain ingress
Through this cool threshold, and he pined night
and day;
He who is the chief of town girt with waters
Full of flowers and crocodiles, now enters
This guarded house.
So, even they whose subtle waists are lithe
Like the serpents that are the ear-rings of *Ambalam's*
Lord,
And are more rebellious than she
Whose locks are decked with *kura* blooms,
Would yet soften after a love-tiff. (362)

Watchmen spoken to in stanza 361 are watchmen of the bawdy house. The watchmen here are those that serve the heroine.

Lines 6-10:

The watchmen discuss the nature of chaste women and conclude that though they may be offended by their respective husbands, they eventually get reconciled.

12. Speaking of the Burgeoning of Her Visage

The beholders speak:

When they but said that the chief of the town
Abounding in fecund fields, had come,
Her wrathful, ensate and flowery eyes
Grew rubedinous like lotus red;
As his look met her look
Surcharged with immense bouderie
By the grace of the Lord of *Chitrambalam*,
There in the pool of her visage
Blue lilies burgeoned from green stalk
And darkening, moved closer. (363)

Line 3:

The words : "சினவாள்" are translated thus. The figure is 'transferred epithet." Truly it is the ensate eyes which are irate.

Line 4:

rubedinous : ruddy

Lines 8 to 10:

The meaning of the passage is that her eyes ruddy with the wrath of bouderie, turned blue, with love suffused.

13. Speaking of Time's Syndrome

The old matrons speak:

The Lord is after the pious-thoughted who ignore
The flowery darts of him with a bow of sugar-cane;
In the gardens that gird *Tillai Ambalam*
Of the Lord who holds the fire in His flowery hand,
Bees blow the white conches, the jasmine buds;
Night with the lamp of crescent greets him,
The chief of the town of encircling fields,
That holds a spear in his flowery hand. (364)

Line 5:

cf. மல்லிகையே வெண்சங்கா வண்டூத

-நளவெண்பா.

14. Their Union Extolled

The old matrons speak:

As the jewels of her pretty feet touched his crown
The bounderie was ended.
In the sea of union the hero seized her by
her clothing,
Drank the honey-dew on her lustrous pearls
And revelled in lively breasts, ever-firm
Like the grace of the Lord of *Ambalam*. (365)

The pun perdu in this poem can be explicated thus:

"The beauteous barge splashed by malodorous waves, piled on the crest of sea and reached (the port of) Kalinga country. He came by lustrous pearls and tasty liquors. Wealth, fadeless like the grace of Ambalam's Lord was now his."

This stanza can also be rendered thus:

"As the bright bargè splashed by the seeking
waves
Sailed on the crest of the sea, he reached
Kalinga;
Bright-rayed pearls came to be his;
He quaffed liquor aplenty;
Like unto the grace of the Lord abiding at
Ambalam
Wealth that knows no decrease
Reached him, the chief of town."

15. Sulking to Joy More and More in Union

The heroine sulks:

Though the pretty one of fascinating smile
With her ruddy lips atremble and dark eyes rolling
Was steeped in a frenzy of sensual bliss
Like them that are blessed with the grace
Of the great Lord of *Chitrambalam*
Whose matted strands of hair are long and dense,
Yet thinking that the felicity enjoyed by her
Would be extended to others, she began to sob,
Heaving deep sighs suffused with cruel venom
And wail and wilt. (366)

Line 8:

cf. "Love is a smoke raised with the fume of sighs".

- Romeo and Juliet, 1, 1, 196.

16. Speaking of the Sulking Once Again Resorted to

The old matrons speak:

The prince was the only man;
She who is fawn-like and whose feet cannot endure
The touch of even flowers, was the only woman
  there.
Yet she jumped out of the bed saying:
"This bed will not support many."
The Lord resenting his flowery darts
Burnt *Kama* away with His fiery eye;
She cannot endure evil ones, like unto them
That hail not His *Chitrambalam*.
What indeed was it, that passed in her mind? (367)

According to the Akam tradition, the beloved with a view to heightening her married felicity would at times conjure up causes for petty quarrels. Here we find her, jumping out of the bed saying that it would not bear the weight of many. We know for truth that she and her husband alone, were there. The subtle suggestion is that her lover was at that time thinking of courtesans.

cf. *"நினைந்திருந்து நோக்கினுங் காயு மனைத்துநீர்
யாருள்ளி நோக்கி னீரென்று"*

-குறள், *1320*.

17. The Praising by them that Stood at the Threshold

The watchmen speak:

Knowing of her anguish, the hero hastened to her
Of bow-like forehead and spear-like eyes
And caused her retain her natural splendour.
Like them that contemplate
Splendorous *Siva's Tillai Ambalam*
Hailed by celestials who come thither to pray,
The chief of town rich in fecund fields
Is certainly a man of truth. (368)

Lines 4-5:

cf. ***"வானிடத் தவரு மண்மேல் வந்தரன் றனையர்ச் சிப்பர்"***

-சிவஞான சித்தியார், 182.

18. Apprising the Advent of Freshes

The townsfolk speak:

He is the chief of the pre-eminent town
Where the male fowl pecks at the soft flower
Of sugarcane rich with juice sweet as honey,
To build a home for the parturition
Of his gravid mate that gently hops.
To the delight of the fawn-eyed damsels
Who hug his mighty shoulder and sport in joy,
Freshes, like unto the grace of the Lord of *Tillai*,
Gush into the hoary tank. (369)

Lines 1-5:

cf. "***உள்ளூர்க் குரீஇத் துள்ளுநடைச் சேவல்***
சூல்முதிர் பேடைக்கு ஈனில் இழைஇயர்,
தேம்பொதிக் கொண்ட தீங்கழைக் கரும்பின்
நாறா வெண்பூக் கொழுதும்
யாணர் ஊரன் பாணன் வாயே"

-***குறுந்தொகை, 85.***

19. Rejoicing at the Arrival of His Chariot

The courtesans speak:

The Lord's lustrous form is fire itself;
He abides at *Chitrambalam*;
O ye of His *Tillai*, whose feet are like flowers,
The great chariot has come to a halt here;
Great is your tapas of yore, to have union with
  him;
The chief of town that is for ever girt with water
  sweet,
Has a form like that of *Muruka* Himself;
Hang on to his strong pair of shoulders. (370)

Lines 1-2:

cf. (i) தீயனார் திகழ் மேனியாய்

-திருஞானசம்பந்தர், 2,77:5.

(ii) தீக்கூரும் திருமேனி

-அப்பர், 6, 58:3.

(iii) தீ வயின் மேனியன்

-திருக்கோவையார், 343.

20. Speaking Among Themselves While Sporting in Water

The participants in this water-sport
Are verily like the nymphs of the waters;
Yet the one like her of the supernal realm comes
 here;
The Lord of *Tillai* with his nails
Clipped off, of yore, the head of *Brahma;*
Like the women of skiey fortresses
Who did not hail *Chitrambalam*,
Do not rue later on; watch over the hero even now
And keep him for ourselves wondrously. (371)

Line 3:

The one of supernal realm may refer to Rambha, Uravasie or Tilotthama, the celebrated celestial courtesans.

The one like her of the supernal realm, here, refers to the exculsively-kept concubine. She is called இல் பரத்தை. காமக்கிழத்தி.

21. Speaking in Self-Admiration

The concubine speaks:

The Lord smote the cities of sky that were alike,
With His arrow winged with fire.
Like them that had been blessed with the grace
Of *Chitrambalam's* Lord of fire-red matted hair,
They of the bright smile hug him close
And hold him as theirs.
If I do not wean his grace away from them all
Let me become like his wife, the flowery liana
Torn tearfully from the chief
Of the well-watered town. (372)

The challenge no doubt is thrown by a strumpet. However she is one who is supreme in her devotion and loyalty to the hero. Unlike the common herd of harlots, this hetaira is extremely chaste.

22. Speaking in Derisive Laughter

The heroine speaks:

The Lord of *Chitrambalam* holds
A pretty fawn on His beauteous palm.
Losing the pride of possessing *Tillai* chief's shoulders
And the glory of his propinquity, my breasts droop
Robbed of their prideful exultation.
If my younger sister should come by one for herself
Her hauteur too will sure be extirpated. (373)

The concubine (இல் பரத்தை) on account of her privileged position is deemed a younger sister by the wife. She is therefore in high spirits. If she herself were to get a younger sister, (i.e., if the hero comes to love some one else as dearly), her pride will be broken to bits. This stanza is addressed by the heroine, on hearing the challenge of the hero's concubine.

In polygamous India, marrying sisters was a common feature.

23. Praising Her Witnessing Her Bashful Reserve

The confidante speaks:

She who is like *Chitrambalam*,
Where abides the dancer of fire,
Is like an unworn flower kept in a closed casket.
Dreading it to be shame
That might get attached to the hero of *Tillai*
She concealed her listlessness even from me;
She is indeed our Mother of Chastity;
Her sterling traits form a wondrous cluster. (374)

Lines 1-2:

cf. (i) யாயாகியளே மாஅயோனே
மடைமாண் செப்பிற் றமிய வைகிய
பெய்யாப் பூவின் மெய் சாயினளே.

-குறுந்தொகை, 9.

(ii) பெய்யாது வைகிய கோதைபோல மெய்சாயினை

-நற்றிணை, 11.

(iii) புடையமை பொலிந்த வகையமை செப்பிற்...
கமழ் நறும் பூ

-மதுரைக் காஞ்சி.

(iv) வகைவரிச் செப்பினுள் வைகிய மலர்போல்
தகை நலம் வாடி

-மணிமேகலை, 4, 65, 6.

(v) வகைவரிச செப்பினுள் வைகிய கோதையேம்

-கலித்தொகை, 68:15.

(vi) காமவி லேகையுங் கற்பக மாலையும் சேம மணிநகைச் செப்பினு ளேந்துபு

-சூளாமணி.

Line 6:

Her chastity is of such nature that she is to be deemed as our mother.

24. Informing the Arrival of Panan

The confidante speaks:

The singer and the songstress have come
With the victorious *yazh* wrought by the Lord of
Tillai,
To wake up our prince with their auspicious aubade.
O dear one whose locks are dark like black river-sand,
We are like unto that tree where during day-time,
The bats that traverse amain the directions at
night,
Abide; they are not aware of our loneliness. (375)

In olden days minstrels used to sing at break of day, to bestir the King from his slumber.

அடுதிறல் மன்னரை யருளிய யெழுகெனத்
தொடுகழல் மன்னனைத் துயில் எடுப்பின்று
-புறப்பொருள் வெண்பாமாலை.

Lines 1-2:

The yazh : This is like Siva's own.

Lines 5-8:

cf. (i) நெடுநீ ராம்ப லடைப்புறத் தன்ன
கொடு மென் சிறைய கூருகிர்ப் பறவை
அகலிலைப் பலவின் சாரன் முன்னிப்
பகலுறை முதுமரம் புலம்பப் போகும்
-குறுந்தொகை, 352.

(ii) பசைபடு பச்சை நெய் தோய்த்தன்ன
சேயுயர் சினைய மாச் சிறைப் பறவை
பகலுறை முதுமரம் புலம்பப் போகி
-அகநானூறு, 244:1-3.

25. The Confidante Blames the Hero

The confidante speaks:

The Lord's hardy shoulders extend in (all) directions;
He is the Dancer of *Tillai Chitrambalam*
Who is decked with the feathers of a stork;
She is like unto His *Koodal* city in the south;
Her teeth beauteous are like the pearls of *valampuri;*
The peerless patron who wields a ruddy spear
Causes her to grieve, and gives himself over to
others;
He indeed isn't a proper person. (376)

கொக்கிறகு : A heron-shaped Asura called Kurandasura was destroyed by Lord Siva who then wore the feathers of the Asura as a mark of his triumph. Kokkiraku is kokkiraku Mantharai which is either Bauhinia acuminta or B. condida.

Line 3:

cf. (i) கொக்கிறகும் பாடி

-திருவாசகம்.

(ii) கொக்கிருந்த மகுடத்து எம்கூத்தன்.

-அப்பர், 6-79:2.

Line 5:

Valampuri : The right-whorled chank which is surrounded by a thousand other chanks.

26. The Townsfolk Blame the Hero

The townsfolk speak:

The very bones of devotees are bathed in nectar
When they behold the Lord dance at *Ambalam*;
In the fields of His *Suzhiyal*, the dishonest cob
Causes his mate to grieve sore, and slumbers
Companied with the heartless mate of *valampuri*;
The hero who is from such a town girt with such fields
Causes his loving wife to wallow in distress;
He isn't a gentleman at all. (377)

Line 3:

Suzhiyal : A hallowed town in Ramanathapuram District, the birth-place of Bhagawan Sri Ramana.

Line 5:

Valampuri : The word in the original is "Chalanjchalam." This is considered to be even superior to Valampuri. The Kazhakam Editor of the Tirukkovaiyar says that Chalanjchalam is found surrounded by a thousand valampuris. The inner message of this stanza (உள்ளுறை) indicates the incontinence of the hero.

27. Speaking in His Defence

The heroine speaks:

To the field over which clouds gather
In the cool Mount *Kailas*, whose Lord
Is the God of *Chitrambalam* and who smote
Them of skiey cities that weren't God-fearing,
He came with mango-leaves in the past;
He is inseparable from me in my waking state;
Even if I forbid him, he'll not from me part;
When I slumber (dream) on the cotton-stuffed bed,
Will he part from my breasts at all? (378)

A chaste wife never exposes her erring husband. Neither will she allow any one to criticise him.

cf. "*புண்ணிற் புளிப் பெய்தாற் போலப்*
புறம் நின்று அழகு பேசாதே"

-ஆண்டாள்.

28. Praising on Thinking

The hero speaks:

The Lord of *Chitrambalam* has matted hair
Where abides *Ganga* of pure pellucid water;
He is not to be perceived by the dark-hearted;
She is like unto His *Seerkazhi*;
Even if I think on something else, she for ever
Thinks of me and always remaining inseparate
Enters my heart.
When I think of her, her inly advent is like unto
A flood that gushes amain downwards. (379)

Seerkazhi : A famous shrine in Thanjavur District, the birth-place of Saint Tiru Gnanasambhandar.

Line 8 :

cf: **பள்ளத்தூழ் உறுபுனல்....**

-திருவாசகம் 5-21.

29. Ingress-Barred, the Hero Thinks of His Infant-Son

The hero speaks:

My little son is like the glorious nectar of the ocean rich;
His lisp is ever sweet to listen to;
He'll truly secure for me supernal domains
Which are theirs who hail the Lord that abides
At *Chitrambalam* decked with *Konrai*
Full of honey and by bees besought;
He'll not come now to hug me;
Howelse can I hope to be companied with her
Over whose fragrant breasts bees are humming? (380)

Line 1:

cf. (i) தம்பொருள் என்பதம் மக்கள் அவர்பொருள்
தம்தம் வினையான் வரும்

-குறள், 63.

(ii) குழல் இனிது யாழ்இனிது என்பதம் மக்கள்
மழலைச் சொல் கேளா தவர்.

-குறள், 66.

30. The Confidante Addressed by the Hero Standing at the Threshold

The hero speaks:

The Lord caused the serpent sent to harm Him
To abide on His hair beside the great moon
And thither dance (in joy);
Sempiternal is His *Ambalam;*
Of what avail is the vow of the women that flourish
  In the goodly domains which surround *Tillai*
  On the forted walls of which rest clouds,
That does not remove the bewildering languishment
Caused by the pair of her carp-like eyes? (381)

The inner import (உள்ளுறை) is as follows:

Serpent and moon are foes. But they live in amity on the matted hair of Siva. Such is His grace that even hostile beings forget their hostility in His presence.

The hero is like unto the serpent, the heroine the moon. She is bitter with him. Yet the hero trusts that the grace of Siva will effect the needed reconciliation.

31. The Reply of the Confidante When Entry is Solicited

The confidante speaks:

Undaunted by wrathful *yalis* Death-like,
Braving the night dense and dark, when eyes could
See nothing, as though their pupils had been torn
  away,
You would rush to meet us, pining all the while
Like the cow separated from its tender calf newly
  delivered;
All this was in the past.
Now in the very chariot which carried you to us
You ride in that street of our Lord's *Tillai*
Where wafts aloft the banner of courtesans. (382)

In polygamous India, the wife had to learn sooner or later, to accommodate her rivals. When Sakuntala was about to leave for her husband's house Sage Kanva advised her thus : ". . . should others share Thy husband's love, ne'er yield thyself a prey To jealousy."
(Tr. Monier Williams).

It is not jealousy which appears to torment the heroine, here. She is sorry for her husband who is like others, unable to rise above the conventional rut.

32. The Confidante Entreats the Lady-Love

The confidante speaks:

O dear, you are like a peafowl in the rainy season;
As the *Asura* decked with sword tried to uproot the mountain
Our Lord crushed his head and hand;
Once in the hill of *Kailas* of the Lord of *Puliyur*
He -- then a stranger --, saved us
From the tough-headed tusker.
He is a prince whose parasol reaches the sky;
All the people of this sea-girt earth truly hail him;
He, even he, oblivious of his glory
Stands at our threshold, tongue-tied. (383)

Line 8:

The confidante tells the heroine that men and women at large find no fault in the hero, and so, though he may appear to be flawed according to her standards, he is yet to be received by her.

33. The Rejoicing of the Inmates of the House

The inmates speak:

The Lord shares His form with His Consort of
  beauteous eyes;
Like a picture is she of the bright forehead,
Painted on the walls of *Chitrambalam*.
To gladden her when beholders said: "Your lover
  is come;
Don't you hear reeds and pipes announcing
  his arrival?"
Heavy and hot were her sighs,
And her eyes of lilies learnt instantaneously
To capture the lustre of lotuses. (384)

Line 1:

தேவி அங்கண் திகழ் மேனியான் also means:

"As the Consort of the Lord is ever casting Her eyes on the Lord with a view to enjoy His beauty uninterruptedly, His frame is now become a reflector of Her eyes."

Lines 7-8:

Her blue eyes turned red, in anger. It should however be added that anger is not natural to them. They learnt it on purpose.

34. Saying that Ingress is Denied

The heroine speaks:

The Lord whose neck is sapphire-like rides a bull;
He could not be perceived by *Brahma* and *Vishnu;*
Oh dear, pearl-like are your teeth and bright!
After conferring on us this child, a walking ruby
That goes decked with tiny tintinnabula
In a cord around its waist and plying a toy-car,
Our lover beholds our door, this day,
In the presence of them of *Tillai*
Who are like gentle peafowls. (385)

Line 4:

Us = me

Line 7:

Our = my

This stanza is addressed to the confidante.

35. Panan Reprimanded

The heroine speaks:

O minstrel, should you tell me that my lover,
The chief of prosperous town at *Tillai* girt with fields
The Lord of whose throat is black in hue
Has true and great affection for me?
Is he not the great one whose love for me is ever-
fixed?
Your are sure a seller of sharp needles to blacksmiths;
Are you at our door to spin your goody goody yarns,
O base eater of cow's flesh! (386)

Lines 1-5:

cf. *யாரினும் இனியன் பேரன்பினனே*
....
யாணர் ஊரன் பாணன் வாயே
-குறுந்தொகை, 85.

'Selling needles in the street of blacksmiths' is a Tamil adage.

cf. Carrying coals to New castle.

Line 8:

cf. *விடக்குத் தின்னிப் புலையா போக*
வேறு ஒரு வீடறிந்தே.
-திருவாவடுதுறைக் கோவை, 413.

This stanza is addressed to the Panan, a hireling minstrel pressed into service by the hero to intercede on his behalf. In so many words the heroine tells him thus: "Your departure is welcome to us."

36. The Speaking of Panan in Grief

The minstrel speaks:

You are like *Tillai* cool whose Lord wields
The murderous *mazhu;*
Your brows that excel bows, curve in displeasure;
Your ruddy lips are atremble in anger;
Pick not stones to pelt at me; be pacified;
May the red of your black eyes change; be not
  wrathful;
May you flourish for many many years;
O lady of gentle speech,
Let me circumambulate your feet and depart. (387)

Lines 5-9:

cf. என்மேல் எறிந்த கற்போதும்; இனிக்கல் எடேல்
எம்பிராட்டி ....
உனதாள் பணிவேன் கதம் தீர்த்தருளே

-திருவாவடுதுறைக் கோவை, 414.

37. Announcing His Resolution to Go with a Guest

The inmates speak:

When they said that the chief of town at *Tillai*
Whose Lord wears the hide of an ichorous tusker,
was coming,
The eyes in the lotus-face of the psittacine warbler
Rolled like fiery spearhead; her eyes, now resembling
red lilies,
Began to shed drops of water like unto pearl.
However, ere they could say that he was with a
guest,
Her eyes were swiftly pervaded with their former
nature
That belongs to the blue lilies.
What type of housewife is she? (388)

Lines 3-5:

The eyes of the soft-spoken lass turned red in anger.

Lines 7-8:

The (red) eyes assumed normalcy and became black again.

38. The Pacification of Love-Tiff

The confidante speaks:

In the burning-ghat where dreaded ghost-throngs
Perform somersaults in corybantic glee,
The Lord doth dance willingly.
You are like unto *Siva's* flawless *Tillai;*
Here he comes with our little gentleman who was erewhile
Seated on his shoulder and smothered with kisses;
The little one is now his aid and assistance;
Quit sorrowing and attend on the prince. (389)

Line 5:

The little gentleman is their child.

39. Her Sulking Once Again when He Hugs Her

The heroine speaks:

The Lord abides at *Tillai Chitrambalam*
Girt with fields where carps abound;
Your young spear-eyed darlings of *Tillai* city
Will resent you if they come to know
Of what you do here;
Lactation makes me unfit for you;
Neither'll we joy in your shameless deception;
Touch not our feet; pursue us not;
Let not your hand touch ours. (390)

This stanza is addressed to hero.

சேல் : A kind of carp; cyprinus.

Lines 4-5:

The meaning of this passage is this.

"If your girls come to know that you are afraid of my wrath, they will be angry with you."

Lines 6-9:

cf. முலைச்சேடு இவணம் குதலைக் களிறு
ஈந்தது செல்ல நில்லே
-கந்தரந்தாதி, 92.

40. Saying that He Bathed Her Publicily She Goes into a Sulk

The heroine speaks:

The king decked with flower bunches on his great shoulders
Wields an envenomed javelin sharp;
Why should he come to this sinner's home of wealth?
The girl who was sporting with a ball,
He bathed in the rushing flood of *Tillai* city
Whose Lord abides at *Chitrambalam*
Decked with crimson *Konrai* wreaths fragrant.
Should he dissemble and appear to be pure
His guile cannot pass muster here. (391)

Lines 4-5:

He who first bathes a girl of the courtesan clan, after her attainment of puberty, can claim the right of hansel.

Lines 8-9:

cf. "Thou subtle, perjured, false disloyal man
Think'st thou I am so shallow, so conceitless,
To be seduced by the flattery,
That hast deceived so many with thy vows?
Return, return, and make thy love amends.
For me, by this pale queen of night I swear
I am so far from granting thy request
That I despise thee for thy wrongful suit,
And by and by intend to chide myself
Even for this time I spend in talking to thee."

- The Two Gentlemen of Verona, 4, 2, 95-104.

41. Sulking with a View to Achieve Union

The heroine speaks:

The Lord sports on His matted hair
Ruddy and fulgurant, the white crescent;
The ankleted feet of *Chitrambalam's* Lord
Are hailed by them that are with salvation blessed;
Our house in the Lord's southard *Potiyil*
Is but great in its humility.
O chief of goodly town!
We have had enough of your grace now. (392)

Line 8:

Grace : Lack of grace.

42. Sulking Preceded by Pejorative Praise

The heroine speaks:

He is the Lord of *Chitrambalam*
Around which are lofty mansions great;
He dances abiding in the hearts of devotees;
In all the seven worlds by Him protected,
Your land and town and clan are supreme;
It spells no good to you, so it seems,
Should you desire us. (393)

Lines 5-6:

cf. ". . . Oh lord, in your palace 'tis said
Are damozels . . .
-- Paragons rare of beauty non-pareil,
Bene docti; their music softens the stones;
You are among them in love flourishing;
Monarchs I seek not; I am the daughter
Of hunters, a hilly race; does the daring
Lion valiant ever seek to mate
A lowly rabbit?"

- The Kuyil Pattu, Tr. T.N.R.

43. Speaking Sorrowfully as Bouderie is Protracted

The hero speaks:

The Lord of *Chitrambalam* redeemed me,
Even me, the incorrigible one.
This is not the nectarean queenliness
That charmed me and made me her own
Causing me to thaw in honied sweetness surpassing,
By casting on me loving looks
From her eyes, a pair of soft flowers,
When I tarried in the Lord's southern *Potiyil*;
This is sure a vile illusion. (394)

Line 9:

The hero who is ever soused in the sweet clemency of his beloved, is here confronted by her who seethes in bitter resentment. He therefore thinks that the one before him is not his beloved but her phantom.

44. Speaking Giving Up Grief

The heroine Speaks:

The Lord of *Chitrambalam* wears the heroic anklet
And ever gravid with myrific valiancy hailed
  by the celestials;
To the cloudy hill of His *Potiyil* in the south
Involved in dense darkness,
He trod the way chasing away the pride of lions
That were out to hunt the elephant-herds,
With a martial javelin as his sole help,
And gifted to us his ever-during love.
Is this the way I should requite his love? (395)

Line 4:

cf. (i) **பொம் மென்ன வண்டலம்பும்**

-கம்பராமாயணம்.

(ii) **பொம்மலோதி**

-குறுந்தொகை, 191-6.

Line 9:

The heroine gets softened thinking of the past incidents which bear eloquent testimony of the hero's unbounded love for her.

45. Alleviation of Love-Quarrel Through the Child

The heroine speaks:

The Lord of *Chitrambalam* has long matted hair
Adorned with honey-laden *konrai* blooms;
In His fecund *Tillai* hailed by celestials
Thrive they, your junior mothers;
His kiss of *tambool* is shared by them all;
I see its impress on thy jowl;
Is it with this shared commonness you should hail me?
Well, can you tell me the arcane place where you
received it?
How could your father hoodwink them of sparkling
teeth
And hand over this prize to you? (396)

This stanza is supposedly addressed to her child.

Line 4:

Junior mothers : The harlot-group is so referred to by the heorine not in forgiving kindness, but in contempt. As Shakespeare says: "Our radiant queen hates sluts and sluttery."

Tambool : Pawn; pan: Astringent mixture of areca-nut, lime etc., wrapped in betel leaf for chewing. When chewed, the tongue and lips get coated with a vermilion tint.

46. Sulking in the Bed

The heroine speaks:

As I kicked him on his chest hill-like
And adorned with beauteous ornaments,
He offered his head, as my younger sister
With bright and bow-like forehead abode thither;
Certes it is that there is none more deceitful than he,
The chief of town of Lord's *Tillai*, who wields
The javelin wrought with cunning craftsmanship.
Thus thinking, the eyes of the girdled lady
Rained tears that rolled down in pearly wreaths. (397)

Lines 1 to 7 are spoken by the lady love and lines 8-9 by her confidante. Traditional interpretation however says that this stanza is spoken by an inmate of the house who chanced to witness the happening.

Lines 1 to 4:

Tamil tradition has it that the wife is the mistress in the bed. She can chastise her husband as she pleases. The Tolkappiyam says:

மனைவி யுயர்வுங் கிழவோன் பணிவு
நினையுங் காலைப் புலவியு ளுரிய

-பொருளியல், 33-

This stanza can be compared to stanza 59, உண்டாட்டுப் படலம், பாலகாண்டம், கம்பராமாயணம் which is as follows:

கொள்ளைப் போர் வாட்கணாளங் கொருத்தி
யோர்குமரனன்னான்
வள்ளைத்தா ளகலந்தன்னை மலர்க்கையாற் புதைப்ப நோக்கி
உள்ளத்தா ருயிரன்னான் மேலுதைபடு மென்று நீநின்
கள்ளத்தாற் புதைத்தி யென்னா முன்னையிற் கனன்று மிக்காள்.

Line 3:

Younger sister : Thus is the concubine of the hero referred to

by the heroine in contempt. Yet the erring husband can usefully remember Shakespeare who says:

"Be not as extreme in submission
As in offence."

- The Merry Wives of Windsor, 4, 11-12.

47. Pacifying Her Bouderie by Narration of an Earlier Event

The hero speaks:

O mother of the gentle crawler, the tender bull-calf!
Even if I were to come by all the worlds guarded
By the celestial Lord of *Ambalam*
On whose matted hair flows the river,
That would not match the brief slumber
Which I enjoyed that night, in the little hamlet,
Lying on a buckskin with you beside me
And your swelling soft breasts pressing against
my chest,
Having spent the day in treading the dusty wilderness
Fire-hot with the scorching rays of the sun. (398)

Line 1 refers to their infant (son).

Lines 2-3:

cf. ". . . . she is mine own
And I as rich in having such a jewel
As twenty seas, if all their sand were pearl,
The water nectar and the rocks pure gold."

- The Two Gentlemen of Verona, 2, 4, 168-171.

Line 5:

Brief slumber:

cf. (i) *தாம் வீழ்வார் மென்தோள் துயிலின் இனிதுகொல்*
தாமரைக் கண்ணான் உலகு.

-குறள், 1103.

(ii) "We may each wreathed in the other's
arms

Our pastimes done, possess a golden
slumber"

- Titus Andronicus, 2, 3, 25-26.

Lines 7-10:

cf. "And wilderness is Paradise enow."
- Omar Khayyam.

48. Sulking Once Again by Referring to Her Beholding His Hetaira

The heroine speaks:

She eyed your son whose bright eyes were touched
  with *kohl*,
Ply his ornate toy-car in our broad door-way;
She wasn't sure if he was your sibling;
Yet when she came to him and him embraced,
I told her: "He is indeed your son;
The sibship betwixt you is true;
This is truly your home; I bid you a warm welcome."
She who is like unto *Puliyur* the Lord of which
Sports a fawn on His hand, then blushed and hied
  away. (399)

Line 1:

She : The hero's favourite harlot.

49. Ending Her Bouderie by Referring to His Benefaction

The confidante speaks:

The chief of town is like a rain cloud
That pours unsolicited;
He is like the *Karpaka* that grants the very thing
  wished;
He is the great friend of the learned;
Minstrels can claim his kinship;
He is truly the *Chintamani*, the wish-yielding stone;
He is like unto *Konrai* wreath
For the divine feet of *Tillai's* Lord;
He is the *Chanka-Nidhi* to the worthy;
Impartial is he, like Destiny;
To his kith and kin, he is a tank
Amidst the town, easy of access;
He is the one who is for ever bountiful to all. (400)

The confidante catalogues the great traits of the hero only to suggest to the heroine, that they should only remember his sterling qualities.

Chanka-Nidhi : The Indian Horn of Plenty.

The message is : "Let us not burden our remembrance with
A heaviness" that belongs not to us.

Paripatal says : வச்சியமானே மறவினை மாற்றுமக்கு
நச்சினார் ஈபவை நாடறிய நும்மவே
சேக்கை யினியார்பாற் செல்வான் மனையாளால்
காக்கை கடிந்தொழுகல் கூடுமோ கூடா
தகவுடை மங்கையர் சான்றாண்மை சான்றோர்
இகழினுங் கேள்வரை யேத்தி யிரைஞ்சுவார்.

INDEX

[The Index is not exhaustive. Items from the Introduction are not listed. The original Tamil works from which passages in Tamil are quoted in the Notes, are not listed. Again words and phrases like *Ambalam*, *Ambalavan*, *Tillai*, *Tillaicchitrambalam*, *Tirucchitrambalam*, *Kovai*, *Kovaiyar* and *Tirukkovaiyar* are not listed].